

**Enchanting Town of Mud:
The Politics of Heritage in Djenné, a
UNESCO World Heritage site in Mali**

A Thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Charlotte Louise Joy

Department of Anthropology
University College London

March 2008

UMI Number: U591508

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI U591508

Published by ProQuest LLC 2013. Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

I, Charlotte Louise Joy, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signature

Abstract

This thesis examines UNESCO's World Heritage project in Djenné, a World Heritage site in Mali. It argues that only through a thorough understanding of UNESCO's history and political structure can the ideological basis for its work be revealed. UNESCO's recent focus on intangible heritage provides a model for examining the difficulties it encounters in Djenné. Accordingly, UNESCO's move from a concentration on 'outstanding universal value' and an archival approach to cultural heritage towards a more dynamic emphasis on cultural transmission finds a resonance in Djenné. A study of the work of artisans, guides and the *Festival du Djennéry* held in the town all reveal cultural heritage to be a negotiated practice, in need of constant adaptation to remain relevant to a population struggling to live in conditions of extreme poverty.

Acknowledgements

I have many people to thank for their help and support over the last four and a half years. First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Michael Rowlands for his constant help and enthusiasm. In Leiden, I would like to thank Annette Schmidt and Rogier Bedaux for their warm welcome and the access I was given to the *Museum Volkenkunde* archives and library. During my fieldwork, I was greatly encouraged by the presence of some of my fellow students also doing their fieldwork in Mali: Laurence Douny, Alessandra Giuffrida, Bodil Olesen and Sophie Mew. Thanks to Trevor Marchand and Susan Vogel for inviting me to attend the ACASA Conference in Gainesville and to the UCL Graduate School for allowing me to attend the *Terra 2008* Conference in Bamako. At UNESCO, I extend my gratitude to César Moreno-Triana for giving me an internship and to all the team in the Intangible Heritage Department for making my stay in Paris such an enjoyable one.

The list of people to thank in Djenné is perhaps too long to include here but I am particularly grateful to the family at the *Tapama* and their neighbours for allowing me into their lives, Bayere and Kadija Kouroumanse, the guides, Ousmane Traoré, Alpha Sidiki Touré, Abdullaye Sao, Morifing Traoré, the staff at the Cultural Mission and the members of *Djenné Patrimoine*. Thank you to Prof. Phil Burnham for reading earlier drafts of some of the chapters and Dr Don Macleod for his feedback on the tourism chapter, the staff at the British Library for all their help and the ESRC for funding the research. My biggest debt of gratitude lies with my family for their endless practical help and patience.

Contents

Abstract	3
Acknowledgements	4
Contents	5
List of figures	7
List of abbreviations	8
A note on orthography, translation and photography	9
Introduction.....	10
Structure of the thesis	14
1. Theoretical and methodological approaches	16
Theoretical perspectives	18
Cultural Heritage in Djenné	23
Methods	25
Participative Ethnography	30
Language and ethnicity	32
2 UNESCO and culture	39
UNESCO's structure	41
UNESCO's history	43
UNESCO's concept of culture.....	47
The World Heritage List	51
Becoming a World Heritage Site.....	53
The concept of World Heritage.....	55
The limits of UNESCO's protection of cultural heritage.....	58
Intangible Heritage and Outstanding Universal Value	61
Conclusion	63
3 Locating heritage through ethnography	65
Islam in Djenné.....	65
Political organisation	74
Decentralisation	76
Grass root organisations in Djenné.....	77
The sanitation project	79
Traditional Celebrations in Djenné.....	83
The Monday market.....	87
Boys' Houses	90
Poverty.....	91
Poverty and heritage	96
Participation in 'official' forms of heritage in Djenné.....	100
Housing from the inside	105
Conclusion	110
4 Contested heritage and the violence of the archive	114
The creation of an archive	115
The 1931 Colonial Exhibition in Vincennes.....	119
The Malian state and the archive	122
The National Museum.....	125
Djenné's archaeology	129
Djenné's archaeology and reclamatory politics.....	134

Djenné's architecture	138
Architecture and Change in Djenné	143
The Dutch Housing Restoration Project	151
The Cultural Mission.....	156
The 2006 Riot.....	159
<i>Terra 2008</i>	171
The Talo Dam	173
Conclusion	176
5 Artisans, embodied knowledge and authenticity	178
Being an embroiderer's apprentice	179
Artisan associations.....	187
Negotiating authenticity	190
Embodied knowledge.....	194
Voices of authenticity in Djenné	197
Biennale de Ségou.....	198
Conclusion	200
6 Guides and the regulation of history in Djenné	201
Djenné's History	201
The Guides	204
Dramane's story	206
The tourist season	213
Becoming a guide in Djenné	217
Papa's story	220
Djenné and multiple histories	223
OMATHO	224
Access to income from cultural heritage	228
The tourist.....	229
The Mali Circuit.....	234
UNESCO and tourism	240
Conclusion	243
7 Festival du Djennéry.....	247
Festivals in Mali	251
Whose festival?.....	254
Negotiations around the crépissage of the Mosque.....	257
Organising the Festival	262
The Opening Ceremony.....	269
The Soirées Culturelles	271
The Exhibition Hall	273
Conclusion	274
Conclusion	277
The lessons from intangible heritage.....	282
Democratising Heritage.....	284
Djenné's future	285
Heritage ethnographies.....	290
Appendices.....	294
Appendix 1: Imams of the Great Mosque in Djenné	294
Appendix 2: <i>Chefs du Village</i>	295
Appendix 3: Ministry of Culture <i>Organigram</i>	296
Appendix 4: Impact of tourism diagram.....	297
References.....	298

List of figures

Figure 1. Location maps of Mali and Djenné.	12
Figure 2. Open drain in Djenné.....	80
Figure 3. Harpoon	85
Figure 4. Djenné's Monday Market	87
Figure 5. A Boys House in Djenné	90
Figure 6. Women's garden in Djenné.....	101
Figure 7. Interior courtyard of a house Photo: André Ullal	106
Figure 8. Ruined house behind the Mosque in Djenné	107
Figure 9. Cattle crossing at Sofara, near Djenné.	124
Figure 10. The National Museum in Bamako.....	126
Figure 11. Façade of a traditional Djenné house at the National Museum.....	128
Figure 12. Traditional house with <i>Façade Toucouleur</i> in Djenné	142
Figure 13. Hand moulded cylindrical brick called <i>Djenné-Ferey</i>	143
Figure 14. The Mosque at Mopti	146
Figure 15. Cement construction in administrative district of Djenné.....	148
Figure 16. <i>Tariqs</i> in the new Islamic library in Djenné.	168
Figure 17A and 17B. Damage to the new Islamic library in Djenné.....	170
Figure 18. Embroidery in Djenné	182
Figure 19. Patrick le Magnifique.....	211
Figure 20. Young boys bringing mud on the eve of the <i>crépissage</i>	259
Figure 21. The annual <i>crépissage</i> of the Great Mosque in Djenné.....	260
Figure 22. Men from the different quartiers gather for the <i>crépissage</i>	261
Figure 23. The opening ceremony of the <i>Festival du Djennéry</i>	269
Figure 24. The Cultural Mission exhibition.....	273

List of abbreviations

ADEMA: Association pour la démocratie au Mali

AHD: Authorised Heritage Discourse

AMUPI: Association Malienne pour l'Unité et le Progrès de l'Islam

CAFO : Coordination des Associations et ONG Féminines du Mali

CESPA: Centre de Services de Production Audiovisuel

CSLP: Cadre Stratégique de Lutte Contre la Pauvreté

GIE: Groupe d'Intérêt Economique

ICH: Intangible Cultural Heritage

ICOMOS: International Council on Monuments and Sites

IMF: International Monetary Fund

MSPAS: Ministère de la Santé, des Personnes Agées et de la Solidarité

OHDH: Observatoire du Développement Humain Durable et de la Lutte contre la Pauvreté

OMATHO: Office Malienne du Tourisme et de l'Hôtellerie

OPAM : Office des Produits Agricoles du Mali

ORTM: Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision du Mali

UDPM: Union Démocratique du Peuple Malien

UNDP/PNUD: United Nations Development Programme/Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

USRDA: Union Soudanaise du Rassemblement Démocratique Africain

WMF: World Monuments Fund

A note on orthography, translation and photography

The spelling throughout this thesis is in UK English. Some names have multiple spellings in the literature e.g. Djenné is also found as Jenné and Jenne. The archaeological site at Djenné-Djeno is also found as Djenné-Jeno or Jenne-Jeno. Where the author has used an alternative spelling for a location or local term, I have kept the original spelling.

Heritage and *Cultural Heritage* are often used synonymously in the literature (see for example Lowenthal, 1998 or Smith 2006). In this thesis, I will use the term 'cultural heritage'.

The translations from books, texts and interviews are my own, unless stated otherwise. The photographs in this thesis were taken over a period of time between summer 2004 and spring 2008 and are all my own, except for figure 7. The currency conversions are rounded up approximations, accurate at the time of writing.

Introduction

In 1988, the Old towns of Djenné, consisting of approximately 1850 mud brick houses (Bedaux *et al.*, 2000) and its mud Mosque, together with a 4 kilometre radius of surrounding archaeological sites were judged as meeting two criteria necessary for inscription on UNESCO's (United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organisation) World Heritage List. These criteria are: to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or has disappeared (criteria iii), and to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history (criteria iv).

The two elements of cultural heritage present in Djenné of special note for UNESCO are therefore its architecture and its archaeology. While the archaeological sites surrounding Djenné are still under threat from looting (Diaby, 2000; Panella, 2002; Ravenhill, 1995), the houses in Djenné are threatened by architectural change. Despite the fixed criteria of its inclusion on the World Heritage List, Djenné's architecture has been evolving. At some point, Djenné could conceivably change to such a large extent that it could face UNESCO's ultimate sanction and lose its World Heritage status (this measure seems set to be taken for the first time in 2008 with the declassification of Dresden in Germany¹). However, there are many stages of intervention and negotiations set out by UNESCO before this could occur. Unlike the archaeological site at Djenné-Djeno (on the World Monuments Fund's *Watch List of 100 Most*

¹ The *Oryx Project*, a Natural World Heritage site in Oman was de-classified in 2007 by UNESCO due to the government's action of cutting down the territory of the site by 90% (personal communication, UNESCO official, January 2008).

Endangered Sites in 1996) and two of Mali's other World Heritage sites, Timbuktu, which was put on UNESCO's *World Heritage in Danger List* between 1990 and 2005 , and the Cliffs of Bandiagara, included on the *Watch List* in 2004, the town of Djenné has so far managed to navigate a careful path between architectural tradition and modernity.

UNESCO's World Heritage project in Djenné has provoked debate amongst residents (*Djennenkés*) about what it means to live in a World Heritage site. This debate usually crystallises around restrictions brought to the town, principally enforced through the work of the Cultural Mission, a body set up to fulfil the Malian Government's international commitment to protecting Djenné's cultural heritage. Another way in which the debate finds expression is through controversy over access to the funds brought to the town in the name of the protection of its cultural heritage, such as a Dutch housing restoration project that took place between 1996 and 2004.

Djenné is located at about 600 kilometers from the capital of Mali, Bamako (Figure 1). Today, it is reached by way of the one tarmac surfaced main road in Mali (known as *le goudron*) that runs the length of the country. Historically, Djenné provided a link between the sedentary south and the nomadic north of Mali. From the 9th Century onwards, Djenné played a major role as a staging post in the trans-Saharan trade and was important for the origin and growth of a succession of influential Empires (described in Chapter 6). The site at Djenné-Djeno has enormous archaeological importance as it was the excavations carried out by the McIntoshes (McIntosh, 1998) that first started to challenge the 'Islamic diffusionist model' which stated that previous to Islamic contact, West Africa did not have its own Empires. The abandoning of the site at Djenné-Djeno and move to the present day town of Djenné

is also a fascinating case study of the rise of Islam in West Africa². The three pillars of the local economy in Djenné are agriculture, fishing and pastoralism (De Jong & Harts-Broekhuis, 1985), to which can be added *maraboutage*, trade and tourism. Like the rest of Mali, the population of Djenné, estimated at just over 12,000, is drawn from many different ethnic groups (explored in the next chapter).

Figure 1. Location maps of Mali and Djenné.

Mali is a landlocked country situated in West Africa. Djenné is on the Bani river.

In the conclusion to her book about the Athenian Acropolis, Yalouri (2001: 188) states that:

Although the classical past can undeniably be oppressive for modern Greece, it can also be empowering, a *telos* to aspire to. It can be both a burden and a weapon in negotiations of power, within Greece and on an international level.

² There is however still an ongoing debate about the true meaning of the archaeological excavations at Djenné-Djeno. For example, I was told by Prof. Rogier Bedaux : "The myth of the abandonment of Djenné-Djeno by Muslims and its connections with the rise of Islam in the region is not proven by archaeology. The hole excavated in Djenné was too small at the bottom to be sure. The upper layers of Djenné-Djeno are eroded away so that stratigraphy stops at the 14th Century. Among the surface materials more recent sherds and pipes are present confirming later habitation of the site." (Personal Communication, 24/06/08)

In Djenné, the past, in the form of architecture and archaeology, is also both a burden and a weapon. Although the relationship between *Djennenkés* and these two manifestations of heritage need immediately to be separated for analytical purposes, the architecture being 'immediate' and affecting everyday lives while the archaeology can be considered more removed; negotiations surrounding control over both forms of heritage have powerful effects on local populations. In fact, as I will show, cultural heritage in Djenné has become entangled in often complex and contradictory ways within international negotiations of World Heritage, colonial imaginations, post-colonial discourses and the demands of tourism. Unbeknown to many residents of Djenné, their town is a *cause célèbre* of UNESCO's World Heritage Project in Africa, being at the same time monumental and African and therefore quietening some of UNESCO's critics who accuse the organisation of being Eurocentric and elitist (Dutt, 1995; Eriksen, 2001; Fontein, 2000; Olaniyan, 2003; Singh, 1998; Turtinen, 2000). It seems almost heretical to question whether Djenné's World Heritage status is a positive force for the present day Djenné, yet this very question is being asked by the town's residents.

This thesis aims to assess the impact of World Heritage status on Djenné by first untangling the assumptions made about the advantages and effects of being granted such a status, such as protection and promotion of sites. A second aim of the thesis is to undertake an 'ethnography of heritage' to provide a counter-balance to the voice of UNESCO and heritage officials working in Djenné and try to assess what happens in Djenné when cultural heritage projects come to the town. Through an exploration of how people live in Djenné, I will question what should and should not be considered 'cultural heritage' and whether more basic human rights, such as the right to food and shelter, are being overlooked in an attempt to preserve Djenné's material heritage. I

will argue that in some ways Djenné's World Heritage status serves to under-develop the town and stands in the way of people's livelihood strategies. Moreover, the ways in which UNESCO and other heritage agencies operate in Djenné re-enforces existing power structures and in some cases further alienates the most disenfranchised residents of Djenné from their cultural heritage. Perhaps a broader view of cultural heritage, such as that explored by UNESCO in relation to its work with intangible heritage, provides us with a more accurate model of the value that people attach to the material culture that surrounds them.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 describes the theoretical and methodological premises of the research. A combination of ethnographic and institutional fieldwork was chosen as an appropriate means with which to approach questions first identified during a pilot project carried out in Djenné in 2004. Chapter 2, 'UNESCO and culture' draws on a discussion of UNESCO's structure and history to demonstrate that its actions in Djenné today are heavily framed by internal political and economic concerns. The term cultural 'value' is put forward as a means to talk about UNESCO's desire to see Djenné maintained as a World Heritage site. Chapter 3, entitled 'Locating heritage through ethnography' questions how implicated the residents of Djenné really are in UNESCO's World Heritage project. By seeking to locate lay interpretations of what constitutes 'heritage' and 'identity' in Djenné, it questions whether the protection of the town's architecture and archaeology should be UNESCO's main focus. The need for survival in the face of poverty is the overwhelming concern for most *Djennenkés* and determines their attitude towards heritage projects operating in the town.

Chapter 4, 'Contested heritage and the violence of the archive' describes how Djenné has been 'created' over time in the eyes of the West and how an archival approach to Djenné has so far served to abstract many people from their built environment. Chapter 5, 'The artisans, embodied knowledge and authenticity' draws on an apprenticeship undertaken with an embroiderer to argue that authenticity is a negotiated category subject to constant constraints. The assumption that Djenné will stay materially the same through protecting the masons' association (the *barey-ton*) can be questioned in the light of the ongoing changes to the town's architecture and artisans' practice. Instead, I will argue that authenticity is embodied in the artisan or mason's practice.

Chapter 6, 'The guides and the regulation of history in Djenné' describes the Malian Government's attempts to regulate the tourist industry in the town through establishing a Tourist Office and imposing exams on all the guides. Against this attempt at standardisation, the tourist discourse is revealed to be more complex than a continuation of a colonial search for the exotic. Most people visiting Djenné are seeking a meaningful encounter with their hosts. The final chapter the '*Festival du Djennéry*' is a case study that shows how all the different types of 'heritage knowledges' found in Djenné co-exist. The Festival was an opportunity for the guides, the artisans, the Imam, the authorities and the formal heritage structures in the town to draw together with a single focus. The tensions and negotiations during the Festival demonstrate that fundamentally 'cultural heritage' in Djenné has been internalised by the powerful local elites and replicates existing power structures in the town.

1. Theoretical and methodological approaches

Attempting an 'ethnography of heritage' (Butler, 2007) in a town like Djenné may at first appear overly ambitious. Djenné has multiple identities: it is both an Islamic centre and located next to one of the most important pre-Islamic archaeological sites in Mali (McIntosh, 2005). It is an important tourist destination as well as being beset by poverty. It is subject to the traditional power structures of the *Grandes Familles* (the most prominent families in Djenné) who are in part represented by the *Chef du Village* and the Imam, as well as being subject to new devolved political power in the form of the *Préfet* and the *Président du Cercle*. Within this, cultural heritage, in its many forms, inevitably becomes a political and economic bargaining tool. It is hard to interpret people's motivations and attitudes towards intervention projects, such as UNESCO's World Heritage project or a housing restoration project discussed later, without first understanding where they situate themselves within the political and social map of Djenné. Added to this complexity are the affiliations of ethnic groups, *quartiers* (neighbourhoods), and powerful patron-client relationships operating in the town.

In an attempt to come up with a useful working definition of cultural heritage in Djenné, I spent the first four months of fieldwork consciously avoiding the term. I hoped that a truer picture of what was and was not considered important in Djenné would emerge from the way people went about and talked about their daily lives. This was naïve in a number of ways. First, people inevitably spoke about what they thought I would find interesting and cultural heritage or *patrimoine* in Djenné is widely

understood as the reason for foreign visits to the town. The presence of tourists, archaeologists and the broadcasting of radio programmes such as the local Radio Jamana's '*Racines*' (roots) programme have all served to sensitise the population to this fact. Second, an internship at UNESCO served to further destabilise the term 'heritage' in my mind. Within UNESCO, heritage can be categorized in a myriad of ways: it can be tangible or intangible, natural or cultural; it can involve landscape, languages, music, dress, performance and cuisine. In fact, heritage can be anything that is identified as meaningful by people.

Explaining the background to its 'Year for Cultural Heritage' campaign in 2002, UNESCO refers to the fact that cultural heritage is something that can be defined, protected and transmitted³ but even this may not be the case for many forms of cultural heritage found in Djenné. Lastly, it is only with the passing of time and the evolution of trust that people speak to you about the things they hold dear. This was the case for the *Tariqs* (Islamic scrolls) kept in many people's homes which were only mentioned to me towards the end of my fieldwork. Many of these documents are in fact legal documents written by *marabouts* (religious teachers) and traditional judges attesting to the ownership of land, homes, fishing rights and marriages and are therefore particularly guarded by their owners. People's view of what is and what is not 'cultural heritage' is therefore highly dependent on their experiences, education and audience.

In Djenné, cultural heritage can have consequences; it can involve secret knowledge, can be potent or benign, and its meaning may shift over time. For the purposes of this

³ See statement on UNESCO's 'Year for Cultural Heritage 2002': <http://portal.unesco.org/culture>

thesis I will use the term ‘cultural heritage’ in reference to UNESCO’s definition of what it has identified as important in Djenné: the architecture and the archaeological sites at Djenné-Djeno. Additionally, I will include those parts of the town, products and activities self-consciously offered up for tourist consumption. These include the work of artisans, the Mosque, local shrines and houses used as cornerstones of the tourist’s visit to the town, as well as Djenné’s first cultural festival held in 2005. Intangible heritage (in a UNESCO sense of the term) is present in this thesis in the form of an exploration of the work of the masons (the *barey-ton*) and artisans as well as a description of festivals, the Monday market, special events and the *Festival du Djennéry*. The inclusion of life histories of people living in Djenné is intended to contextualise people’s attitudes towards this narrowly identified form of cultural heritage.

The key question this thesis aims to address is therefore whether a Western notion of heritage protection and transmission, as set out in UNESCO’s World Heritage Project, is appropriate in Djenné. What can the case of Djenné teach us about the limits of such an approach to cultural heritage? Who is the true audience of UNESCO’s World Heritage Project? And how are ambitions of identification, protection, conservation and transmission (Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention) possible in the dynamic setting of a living town?

Theoretical perspectives

The anthropological study of tangible and intangible cultural heritage is part of the discipline’s wider study of material culture. The study of material culture has at its heart a concern with how people derive personal meaning from the material world that surrounds them (see Tilley *et al*, 2006 for a volume that brings together recent

thinking in the field of material culture). The relationship between people and things has been conceptualised in many ways, for example through the study of consumption (Miller, 1997), language and metaphor (Tilley, 1999) and phenomenology (Tilley, 1994). The specific study of cultural heritage also strongly draws on tourism studies (Nash, 1996; Urry, 2002), museum studies (Greenfield, 1995; Kaplan, 1994), legal discussions of cultural rights (Rowlands, 2002) studies of history and memory (Forty & Küchler, 1999; Samuel, 1994; Yates, 1966) and studies of nationalism (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983).

Smith (2006) describes the emergence of what she calls the 'Authorised Heritage Discourse' (AHD). It is a "professional discourse that privileges expert values and knowledge about the past and its material manifestations, and dominates and regulates professional heritage practices" (2006: 4). The AHD therefore serves to legitimise and normalise the work and interventions of heritage professionals. Through the institutionalisation of the AHD by bodies such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and UNESCO, the foundational assumptions on which it is based are obscured and counter-voices are drowned out. Smith sees heritage as a cultural practice that has been developed along Western elitist lines. It is therefore not surprising to find dissenting voices and experiences that do not fit with the AHD in non-Western countries. Smith also allows us to approach heritage from a different angle and, instead of seeing the AHD arising from the material realities of heritage around the world, she aims to document how the AHD goes about constructing a material reality for itself.

Heritage therefore becomes the domain of the professional or expert through a Foucauldian 'technique of power' (Smith, 2006: 14). In Djenné, it is certainly true that

certain institutions, such as the Cultural Mission, have set themselves apart as experts on the town's heritage and its preservation. Staffed by heritage professionals from outside Djenné, the Cultural Mission is sometimes at odds with the expertise and lay interpretations of heritage embodied by the residents of Djenné.

Smith builds on previous work that identifies the nostalgia and anxiety inherent in the West's project to archive the past. The rise of the 'heritage industry' in the West since the Second World War has prompted varied criticisms and comments. Lowenthal (1998) talks about a 'cult of heritage' embraced by people with religious fever. He sees a new emphasis on cultural heritage as a consolation for an insecure present, a pliable vision of the past used for contemporary purposes. Extending the religious analogy, heritage sites become places of pilgrimage for tourists taking part in massive secular rituals.

Fears over the political dimensions of the heritage 'crusade' are expressed in different ways. First, it is thought that the multi-vocality of the past risks being drowned out by a dominant and simplified narrative of events (Hall, 2005) and second, in the case of global institutions such as UNESCO, the effects of exporting an ethno-centric model of heritage and preservation to the rest of the world are questioned (Eriksen, 2001). In the first instance, minority groups' experiences of the past tend to be drowned out by the dominant elite's conceptualisation of events. Hall (2005) states that a tradition is never neutral as it necessarily embodies a set of values and consequently heritage should be seen as a 'discursive practice', a tool by which the nation constructs itself. In the second instance, UNESCO cannot escape the fact that it is a political institution that negotiates its position and priorities in response to international diplomacy and Western dominated global politics (Dutt, 1995).

In order to be archived and preserved, cultural heritage has to achieve separation from human actors (Smith, 2006). The protection of African cultural heritage can be seen to take place within this Western paradigm of separation and consequent fear of loss. Crucially, in the case of Djenné, the separation between the population and their cultural heritage and the subsequent fear of loss is not present. Instead, as will be explored in Chapter 3, people in Djenné live within the cultural heritage designated for protection by UNESCO. In Djenné, the fear of loss is overwhelmingly that of loss of life, death due to poor harvests, unsanitary living conditions and consequent disease. The idea of heritage as ‘memory’ (Rowlands & Tilley, 2006: 500) therefore finds resistance in Djenné:

The monumentalizing of time is...inseparable from changes in social memory. A monument is an object taken out of history, by history. Yet it stands for history in terms of what it has left behind, a mnemonic trace that also separates it from the present.

In the introduction to *Material Memories*, Kwint (Kwint *et al.*, 1999) explores the strong relationship between objects and memory. Monuments become a form of ‘materialising memories’ and the transmission of cultural memory occurs through the protection of monuments and architecture. The concept of ‘memory work’ (Rowlands, 1993) arises from this schema: through in some way ‘protecting’ tangible and intangible heritage from change, cultural memory will remain intact. Nora’s (1989) concept of *‘lieux de mémoire’* (places of memory) similarly asserts that in a world where we have lost the ‘environments of memory’ (*milieux de mémoire*), we fabricate ‘places of memory’, monuments such as war memorials that are able to

‘house’ memories and provide a focus for remembering (and a means of forgetting, thus healing).

The study of destruction and iconoclasm (see for example Meskell, 2002) as well as studies of memory (Radstone, 2000) and memorialisation (Rowlands, 1999) throw light on the way in which traumatic or ‘contested’ memories (Bender 1988) are attached and detached from physical settings. However UNESCO has struggled to explain the explicit means of cultural transmission (memory work) in non-traumatic instances, especially in their work with intangible cultural heritage. When faced with the task of protecting its *‘Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage’* (described in the next chapter) UNESCO adopted its standard approach of documenting and archiving. For example, a sound library was set up to protect the ‘Polyphonic Singing of the Aka Pygmies’ (declared a Masterpiece in 2003). However, the establishment of a sound archive not only brought up practical problems due to the physical setting of the community but also leads one to wonder how the archive will be used in practice and through what means it will contribute locally to cultural transmission.

Recent writings in cultural heritage have attempted to destabilise the euro-centric premise of cultural heritage studies (Butler 2006; De Jong & Rowlands, 2007) and instead move towards the concept of ‘heritage futures’, put simply, how people can engage with their cultural heritage to envisage better futures for themselves. This thesis situates itself within this body of work and aims to contribute to the understanding of how ‘subaltern’ experiences (Butler, 2007) can better be included within the broader discipline of cultural heritage.

Cultural Heritage in Djenné

Throughout this thesis I argue that an understanding of the impact of UNESCO on Djenné and the value local people attribute to cultural heritage can be achieved through the exploration of different ‘forms of knowledge’ about cultural heritage that co-exist in the town. For analytical purposes I term these different forms of knowledge ‘indigenous’, ‘archival’, ‘embodied’, and ‘historical’. This list is not exhaustive and it is not the only way cultural heritage can be conceptualised in Djenné. However, through examining a case study of each type of knowledge, a picture of cultural heritage emerges that challenges the prioritisation of any one form of knowledge over another. For example, a study of the embodied practices of artisans in Djenné (Chapter 5) has a direct bearing on understanding the limitation of UNESCO’s archival practices in Djenné (described in Chapter 4). Similarly an exploration of indigenous knowledge about Djenné (Chapter 3) concludes that poverty is at the heart of most people’s experience of living in the town. These conditions of poverty in Djenné illuminate the reactions of local people to UNESCO’s activities.

Theorising heritage as knowledge is not original. As Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge (2000: 18) note: “Heritage is a knowledge, a cultural product and a political resource.” What this thesis aims to contribute to the debate about the preservation of cultural heritage is a ‘bottom up’ approach to the negotiation of the different kinds of ‘heritage knowledges’ found in Djenné. However, this thesis is not an attempt to represent local knowledge in the face of a dominant ‘outside’ Western knowledge. Instead, I attempt to show knowledge as a negotiated practice, as Pottier (2003: 4) describes in his volume *Negotiating Local Knowledge*:

The specific aim of the volume is to go beyond the over simplistic ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy, Western scientists versus local knowledge holders, in order to explore a number of local encounters in which knowledges (plural) are negotiated by a multitude of stakeholders. The focus of our collection concerns local-level processes of knowledge negotiation; processes that remain little documented and understood.

It is my perception that there are a number of identity discourses going on in Djenné, mostly imposed from the outside, all of which arise in some way or another from the different types of ‘heritage knowledges’. First, Djenné is seen by some as a medieval town stuck in time⁴, it ‘stands for’ the past of humankind when we all lived in banco (mud brick) or wattle-and-daub houses. This discourse can be described as patronising and demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of how people live in Djenné. It stems from a desire for ‘authenticity’ and resonates with the idea of the past as something we have lost, a locus of nostalgia. Djenné is therefore a living link with a simpler, pre-modern past that is forever lost to us.

Second, Djenné may be seen as a global town, a member of an elite group of global towns around the world that are part of the World Heritage club. Third, a form of ‘biodiversity’ argument can be applied to Djenné where protecting Djenné protects the global diversity of architectural styles. It is the one ‘specimen’ that will be preserved, the one place that will stand for the whole. As long as Djenné stays materially the same, other mud brick towns across the world can change and adapt. A second assumption linked to the biodiversity argument is that Djenné is its own little

⁴ See Malian Tourist Office website at www.officetourisme-mali.com. Djenné is referred to a ‘une ville musée’ (a museum town).

self-sustaining system as the knowledge, labour and materials needed for the continuation of its architecture are all to be found in the town. Against these external discourses, I suggest that an ethnographic approach to cultural heritage can provide a counterpoint in the form of local discourses about identity, cultural heritage and livelihood strategies.

Methods

The planning for the ten months fieldwork in Djenné in 2005 came from a month-long pilot project undertaken in Djenné the previous year. On that visit, I had limited myself to documenting the issues surrounding the Dutch housing restoration project that took place between 1996 and 2004, discussed in Chapter 4. The pilot project led me to believe that undertaking an 'ethnography of heritage' in Djenné would be a valuable way in which to examine the impact of international bodies such as UNESCO on a local setting. One principal finding from the pilot was that in order to understand UNESCO and its functioning, practical experience of the institution would be invaluable.

My ten months in Djenné were punctuated by brief periods away from the town. These multiple returns to Djenné allowed me to open up many new channels of communications with people. One week away from Djenné was due to my return to England for my grandfather's funeral. A happy absence was for my wedding in Timbuktu. The wedding preparation had taken place in Djenné with people drawing on their contacts to ensure the day was a success. Talk of a wedding also prompted people to get out their photographic albums and speak of weddings in Djenné and the surrounding villages. On one occasion, I went to the Ségou Festival for three days and

was able to usefully share what I had seen with the committee organising the Djenné Festival the following year.

For the last six months of fieldwork, my husband came to Mali to work as a doctor. At first he worked for an NGO in the north of the country as famine threatened the Tuareg population living near the border with Algeria. He then volunteered for three months at the Djenné hospital. For most of my time in Djenné therefore I was known as a married woman, married to a doctor who also worked in Mali. This was a positive thing on a number of levels. Firstly, there was no ambiguity in my relationships with younger male informants (such as the guides), and older informants approved of my married status and my husband's profession. There also seemed to be a general feeling of approval of my husband's role as a volunteer and my bringing him to the town due to my choice of Djenné as a field site. Finally, I got pregnant at the end of my fieldwork to many people's delight as they considered the baby to be special as he was 'made in Djenné'. Since our departure, contact has been maintained in a large part through sending news and photographs of my son while receiving news of births, deaths and marriages in Djenné.

Living out my 'real' life in Djenné was beneficial not only personally but it also allowed me to establish relationships with people based on them knowing me and about my life, as well as my finding out about theirs. *Djennenkés* have had to get used to the presence of a number of anthropologists and archaeologists over the years so the interview format (with a small 'gift' as incentive) is familiar to many. During the main part of my fieldwork, I undertook over fifty taped semi-structured interviews (with the help of an interpreter in about half the cases) as well as two 6-person focus groups. I also interviewed people without recording them when the situation arose. In

total, approximately 60 people were formally interviewed. In addition, I formally interviewed a further 18 people during the pilot phase of my research⁵. Some interviews were stand-alone, such as interviewing an ex-looter of the archaeological sites or a drummer, while others were part of a series of interviews with the same person. Each interview had an overall aim (for example, gauging the reaction to the festival) and began with specific questions that led on to more general discussion.

Informants gave their verbal consent at the beginning of the interview for the information to be used in my written work. Interviews with people to whom I spoke to on a regular basis always started with the opportunity for them to give further feedback or thoughts about the preceding interview. Where ethical considerations were paramount, such as in discussion of illegal activities relating to looting of the archaeological site or the embezzling of money during the festival, the tape was turned off, and discussions that were held off the record are not included in this thesis. As well as consciously structured encounters in Djenné, my days were filled with general participant observation and conversations with friends. The information I obtained in this way is the backbone of this thesis and informed the questions I asked and the way I conceptualised the answers.

The issue of remaining anonymous was not a concern for the great majority of informants, although I have chosen to mostly use pseudonyms throughout this thesis.

⁵ The people formally interviewed during the pilot phase of my research comprised of 13 men and 5 women, representing a balance of ethnic groups, however largely drawn from the professional classes of Djenné. During my main body of research I formally interviewed approximately 40 men and 20 women (and the women were more likely to be interviewed in groups, for example at an adult literacy class, the exception being three regular female informants). These informants represented a representative mix of ages and ethnicities. The bias towards men is due to the professions I chose to concentrate on: artisans, guides, cultural practitioners. I formally interviewed 15 tourists - individual travellers, those in groups and representative of 2 families travelling to Djenné. However, I informally spoke to well over 100 tourists, due to my time working at the *atelier*, working with guides, eating in Djenné's restaurants, travelling on public transport and living at the *Tapama Residence* (which acted as a hotel during the tourist season). During my time working on the Festival Committee, I formally interviewed each committee member at least twice, as well as participating in twice weekly meetings over a period of three months.

However, many people will be identifiable to those who know them due to the specificity of what they do or a unique life history. In these cases, I have as much as possible tried to ensure that what I have included about them is what they willingly gave me consent to present on their behalf. The people I chose to interview were a mix of people I met through serendipity (such as tourists) and people I was put in touch with through friends, such as masons or house owners involved in the Dutch housing restoration project. Some of the interviews were done at people's requests as they felt that they had a contribution to make to my research and in some ways saw me as a potential spokesperson on their behalf. This was a difficult role to adopt and I do not pretend that I have become a spokesperson on behalf of the 'ordinary Djennenké'. I do however hope that my analysis of UNESCO's intervention in Djenné helps in some way to redress previous imbalances and develop thinking about the needs of people living within World Heritage sites.

As well as formal interviews, general participant observation and keeping a research diary, I structured my first three months of fieldwork around two daily activities, an apprenticeship with an embroiderer and growing vegetables within the women's garden on the outskirts of the town. Spending time in the women's garden and subsequently with women in their homes, allowed me to develop a picture of people's everyday lives and the way in which these lives intersected with UNESCO's World Heritage project in the town. The apprenticeship with the embroider had a twofold effect: first, it allowed me to have repeated and detailed conversations about the production of *artisanat* in Djenné, its markets and evolution over time; second it meant that I could always be found in the same semi-public place everyday and was a way in which to meet a large number of people in a contextualised way.

Both of these activities proved to be very useful in giving a shape to my day and getting to know people within the town. I chose to live in a compound which is known locally as '*Millionso*' (the Millionaire House) as it is considered to have cost more than one million CFA (£1,000) to build. As well as being a home, *Millionso* is also used as a hotel during the tourist season and has five rooms that are rented out to tourists. I shared a kitchen and a covered terrace with a Cuban doctor working at the local hospital (the Cuban Government has an agreement with the Malian Government to provide doctors on a Voluntary Service Overseas model). Before the arrival of my husband, therefore, I was already associated with a doctor in the town. People were free to come and visit the doctor in the evening and often did so to avoid the hospital fee. When a new Cuban doctor arrived half way through my fieldwork, I often had to act as an interpreter translating the patient's French into Spanish.

There were two American Peace Corps⁶ volunteers in Djenné during my fieldwork, and I came to know them well. In people's minds, my presence was probably not dissimilar to theirs, and it therefore did not come as a surprise that I was often asked and expected to offer help (usually technologically related). The Peace Corps volunteers were both highly regarded as one had chosen to stay on in Djenné for a third year to implement a sewerage system he had helped design and the other worked successfully with women in the surrounding villages on healthcare projects. Both of them spoke fluent Bambara and were confident in *Djennenké* and other local dialects. Despite this little network of expatriates, life in Djenné is hard and isolating for outsiders. All of us suffered from low level depression, home sickness and

⁶ US funded scheme, started by President Kennedy, placing young American graduates in communities in need around the world. The Peace Corps volunteers receive extensive language training and live with their host community for approximately two years.

boredom at times. In times of food shortages, the misery, illness and death that surrounded us was quite overwhelming. At other times, such as during the tourist season or at the time of festivals the town seemed alive and optimistic and days passed by rapidly.

Participative Ethnography

At two points during my fieldwork, I undertook participatory fieldwork in a way that I felt differed from my usual participant observation or structured activities, described above. The first instance was during my internship at UNESCO and the second was working as a committee member during the *Festival du Djennéry*. The difficulty I encountered when dealing with the data that I collected in this way is perhaps best summarised by Mosse (2006).

Mosse describes the anger caused by the publication of his ethnography resulting from his long-term participatory fieldwork with development professionals. The anger was caused not by factual errors in his account but by a perceived breach of trust due to his ambiguous position as both consultant and anthropologist.

Mosse found a way to get around the problem of access to development professionals by becoming one himself but, in so doing, he created a bond of trust and level of expectation about discretion that he violated by publishing his findings. He describes development projects as politically negotiated interventions and identifies their ability to reproduce themselves through control over their interpretation as central to their work. Mosse's former colleagues felt personally attacked by his interpretations and called for the book not to be published. His experience led him to conclude that:

Anthropological 'right-ness' - in the sense of both veracity and of *entitlement* to represent - is also social. Rightness is not a matter of the ontological status of our evidence... and not just an individual epistemological awareness, but the outcome of social contests over boundaries and the location of knowing.

(Mosse, 2006: 950, original emphasis)

During my two month internship in the Intangible Heritage Department at UNESCO I openly stated my anthropological objectives and the expected outcome of my research. However, I very quickly became assimilated within the team of people working in the Department and beyond and had privileged access to private conversations, personal frustrations and institutional discussions, on both formal and informal occasions. My task was to assess the success and failings of the *Masterpieces* programme through collating the responses to a survey sent to the relevant member states. Putting aside scepticism about the limitations of a self-assessment survey due to the overt patron-client relationship between UNESCO (providers of funds for the implementation of management programmes) and the member states, I proceeded with writing the required document.

My analysis of the surveys was very quickly 'institutionalised' and any criticism (however constructive) edited out, leaving only a vague and impressionistic overview. UNESCO operates within a delicate political balance where Member States are quick to take offence and individuals guard their positions jealously. It is not my intention to discuss UNESCO's limitations and internal self-doubt in relation to the *Masterpieces* programme as the programme is not the subject of this thesis. However, my work in the Intangible Heritage Department did allow me to understand how a project becomes institutionalised and disembedded from the complex reality in which it is implemented. The individuals with whom I worked were all highly professional

and motivated, but the channelling of the work through an institution had an effect of dilution, simplification and above all, of sidestepping confrontation. This effect can be found again in relation to UNESCO's work in Djenné, discussed throughout this thesis.

My second experience of participatory fieldwork is described in Chapter 7 when I became involved in the planning and running of Djenné's first cultural festival in 2005. The Festival was initiated by a non-governmental committee of *Djennenkés* made up of people who were willing to give up their time and expertise for free. My official role was within the 'Communications Committee', and my job included the design and production of posters and tickets as well as filming and documenting the festival itself. I was present at the festival planning meetings and soon became embroiled in local power struggles. The experience was in large part a baptism of fire into local politics, corruption and underhand negotiations. At the time, however, I was unaware of a lot of this and it is only after the event that previous experiences took on their full significance. How to approach the documentation of these events while protecting the innocent (and not so innocent) is difficult. It is not my intention to expose individual people or happenings, as this could be detrimental to people and their families. Instead I draw on the experience to explore how heritage in Djenné has become a focus of contestation and is used to mobilise resources.

Language and ethnicity

Approximately 12,000 people live in Djenné (Schijns 1994: 171). Gaining an adequate understanding of the different ethnic groups that are represented in Djenné was a challenging part of my fieldwork as I found that different terms were used depending on whom I spoke to. I therefore chose to approach the question by asking people to

describe the different ethnic groups found in the town themselves and the group's relationship with the town and its history. Usually different ethnic groups were spoken about in terms of the '*quartiers*' of Djenné where they were concentrated, and their means of subsistence.

There is little detailed published work on the ethnic distribution within the whole of Mali⁷. Research in the area of Mali where Djenné is located, the *Pondo*, essentially the inner delta area stretching from Timbuktu to San, reveals an ethnic mix dominated by the Peul (Maas & Mommersteeg, 1992). The Peul make up 35% of the area's population and are divided into three main groups: the free Peul, the group of Peul whose mode of subsistence is principally trade or artisanat, and the Peul 'slaves' (*Esclaves de Peul*) who are the descendants of the old Peul slaves, also known as the *Rimaïbe*. The second most important ethnic group in the region are the Marka (17%), then the Bambara (16%), the Bozo (16%) and the Bobo (7%). The other ethnic groups that are represented in the area are the Dogon, the Toucouleur, the Tuareg and the Songhay.

The most recent published survey of ethnic groups in Djenné is based on research carried out between 1981 and 1983 (La Violette, 2000). However, in common with the survey above relating to the ethnic make-up of the *Pondo* region, La Violette relies on statistics published in 1967 (Gallais, 1967) and based on a 1958 census of Djenné. This census revealed that of a population of 6,809, Djenné was dominated by Marka (1,462) and Bozo (1389), with smaller numbers of Somono (510), Songhai (662), Arma - who

⁷ I unsuccessfully tried to get up to date statistics from a contact at the World Bank in Bamako. He found no recent relevant literature on the subject during his archival search on my behalf. It was subsequently suggested to me that no recent census would include people's ethnicity as this would be politically incorrect, all people being Malian (Personal Communication, Prof Rogier Bedaux, 13/05/08)

are said to be descended from the Moroccan invasion of the 16th Century- (668), Fulani (807), Rimaibe (467) and Diawanbe (618). The other groups counted were Bambara, Tuareg and Arab (La Violette, 2000: 19). To clarify some of the disparities in terms used by different authors, La Violette explains that the Marka are also known as Soninke or Nono (their pre-Islamic name) and that the Fulani are the dominant pastoral ethnic group, also known as Peul. She concludes that there is widespread confusion:

People with whom I spoke about these ethnonyms did not agree amongst themselves. Some respondents claimed that Nono designated the rural component of the regional Marka, while others said that Nono was the Bozo language term for Jennenké (La Violette, 2000: 22)

To simplify things dramatically, ethnic groups in Djenné, like the rest of Mali, are described by people locally as correlating with subsistence activities so the Bozo are fishermen, the Peul are herders, the Bambara are farmers and the Marka are merchants, religious elites and rice cultivators. Gallais (1994: 20) argues that in fact the Marka are not an ethnic group but instead a cultural-historic one, defined by their Islamic religion. However, these subsistence categories do not encompass other groups such as the Bobo who are described by many people in Djenné predominantly in relation to their practices and religion: they eat dog meat, drink millet beer and their villages are still mainly animist so are places of powerful magic. The Bobo, together with the Bozo, are considered by many in Djenné to be the earliest inhabitants of the town (*les autochtones*).

Subsistence categories also conflate diversification, sub-groups or the 'castes' present within ethnicities, or associations such as the *griots* (oral historians and praise

singers, an inherited position traditionally attached to royal courts), blacksmiths or hunters (Tamari, 1991). As has been noted by Maas and Mommersteeg (1992: 39), the strict correlation between ethnic groups and occupation, and ethnic group and *quartier* in Djenné has become a trend rather than a physical reality. Due to the precariousness of rains and harvests, many people now have a broad approach to subsistence activities as a result fishing, trade and cultivation have all been appropriated by numerous ethnicities.

In Djenné, the Bozos have a special status within the town since the founding myth of Djenné is the story of the Bozo sacrificed virgin *Tapama Djennépo* (which translates as 'my sister' Djennépo). Various versions of the story of *Tapama* can be heard, all following essentially the same narrative: when the first inhabitants of Djenné tried to build the town, malevolent spirits caused the walls of the houses to fall down. The town's elders consulted *marabouts* (Koranic teachers) who decreed that a virgin should be sacrificed to appease the spirits. Many people in the town refused to give up their daughters until an elderly Bozo man came forward. His daughter was buried alive and several times she shook with terror and the wall fell down. Finally, the father asked her to stay still so as not to shame him and she obeyed. The tomb of *Tapama* still stands in Djenné today and can be visited by tourists. The present day Djennépo family (who are said to be the kin of *Tapama*) hold special ritual offices during celebrations. For example, during *Tabay Ho* (the Festival of the Rabbit), the most senior member of the Djennépo family gives the call for the hunt to start and on the occasion of Djenné's first Festival in 2005, a young woman representative of the Djennépo family was an honoured guest amongst the dancers.

Of interest to me were how present day relationships are negotiated through the prism of ethnicity and whether other affiliations, such as political membership (discussed in the next chapter) or the *quartier* a person lived in were of equal importance. I also wanted to explore whether the ‘*Grandes Familles*’ in Djenné, the families with the most money and power, were from a particular ethnic group. The *Grandes Familles* in Djenné are often divided into ‘*Grandes Familles maraboutiques*’ (Islamic teachers), ‘*Grandes Familles notables*’ (noble) and ‘*Grandes Familles guerriers*’ (warriors) depending on their histories. Family names such as ‘Konto’ and ‘Masakolona’ are associated with past military exploits, ‘Cissé’ and ‘Touré’ are long established noble names and the Imams of Djenné have over the years been drawn from a number of ‘*Grandes Familles maraboutiques*’ (Appendix 1).

In Djenné, the ambition to understand people’s identity through ethnicity, family history and geographical location was further complicated by the fact that there is a strong ‘*Djennenké*’ identity and language (based on the Songhay language). Additionally, I found out that someone’s ethnicity was sometimes fluid, as was the case for an elderly woman who described herself as Bozo although before coming to Djenné her family were Songhay and came from a small village near Timbuktu named Dandi. Of her grand-father’s generation, five members of the family went to work in Kassina and four came to Djenné to work as masons. That is why their family name became ‘*Kassinantao*’ (the people of Kassina). Some clues as to the process of assimilation of subsequent migrations to Djenné could perhaps be found in the remaining *Tariqs* (scrolls) that are still predominantly kept in people’s homes in Djenné (discussed in Chapter 4). Overall, however, it is very difficult to put together an accurate model of power relations in Djenné based on peoples’ multiple identities. While it is true that some families are dominant in certain roles, for example the

Maiga family have held the post of '*Chef du Village*' for eight out of the last eleven times the position has changed hands (Appendix 2), outside influences, such as decentralisation and changes in national government are having a considerable effect on some political positions.

In terms of language, most people understand one another in Djenné by speaking '*Djennenké*' as a second or third language. As well as having the *Djennenké* language (and to a large extent a '*Djennenké*' identity) in common, the different ethnic groups in the town get along together through formalised 'joking relationships' ('*cousinage*'). The educated elite speak good French as it is still the language taught in schools (although a new system of bi-lingual education, based on French being phased in gradually with the child's home language is being developed across Mali). Many people also have a basic vocabulary in other languages spoken in Djenné such as Bamana or Peul. This use of multiple languages was a challenge during interviews. My research assistant was Bozo but spoke excellent French, Peul and *Djennenké*. Although I am bi-lingual in French and English, any interpreted conversation was at least 'translated' once, if not twice or three times. When undertaking interviews in French, I was aware that restricted vocabulary did not allow some informants to express themselves as fully as they may have wished to. The recorded interviews need therefore to be considered within their linguistic limitations although they do provide a valuable insight into life in Djenné. I was careful to double-check 'facts' that may have been misinterpreted by asking the same question of several different informants or in different ways to the same person.

Before being able to explore UNESCO's impact on Djenné through ethnography, it is essential to explore exactly how UNESCO's is linked to Djenné through its World

Heritage project. Furthermore, UNESCO as an institution must be understood through an examination of its history and its current political and economic constraints. Only then can UNESCO's impact on Djenné be truly understood. A bottom up ethnography of cultural heritage therefore needs to be met with a top down analysis of cultural institutions in order to reveal the places where abstract institutional decisions meet people's real lives.

2 UNESCO and culture

Over the last few decades, cultural heritage sites in Africa have gained increasing global recognition. UNESCO has been at the forefront of providing a successful framework for the identification and documentation of African national heritage. As part of UNESCO's work, initiatives such as 'Africa 2009' are ensuring the training and funding of heritage professionals across the continent⁸. Consequently, many African nation states now have a permanent body of personnel committed to the recognition of the cultural value of their patrimony. However, very little research has been done on the new African 'heritage elites' that have emerged as a consequence of this activity, nor has the impact of cultural heritage programmes on local people been widely studied.

One way in which to study the impact of cultural heritage initiatives in Africa is by focussing on their desired outcomes, and this can best be done by concentrating on the 'value' attributed to these outcomes, be it be cultural, economic or political. The way in which 'value' is attached to, and detached from cultural heritage by different parties (UNESCO, national government, *Djennenkés*) serves as a starting point for analysis. Importantly, this conceptualisation of value is in a constant state of flux. For example, the institutional understanding of the term 'cultural value' within UNESCO has changed substantially since its recent dealings with intangible heritage. Overall, however, the picture that emerges from a consideration of value is one of a divide, between a UNESCO universalising and bureaucratic approach to the protection of

⁸ www.africa2009.net

cultural heritage on one hand, and the local reality of living in a poverty stricken town in Mali on the other. In this chapter I will explore how UNESCO's structure and history have led to a particular institutional approach to the promotion of culture and measurement of cultural value. This institutional or 'archival' approach will be revealed in Chapter 4 to have a long pedigree in the way the West has apprehended Djenné.

I will argue that UNESCO's activities in Mali, which are all mediated through the Malian government, are the result of UNESCO's institutional concerns as much as a reaction to local realities, and that in order to increase its relevance and effectiveness, UNESCO needs to engage with the ethnographic reality of the World Heritage sites it brings under its jurisdiction. Furthermore, although UNESCO is explicitly not a development institution (Joy: 2007), it is increasingly seeing its remit as one of improving peoples' lives through promoting their cultural heritage (see the *Mémorandum de Vienne*, adopted by UNESCO in 2005⁹). I will argue therefore that it is no longer appropriate to simply view UNESCO's World Heritage Project as a labelling exercise, responding to individual government's concerns for their cultural heritage. As will be described, the process of becoming a World Heritage site is a complex partnership between UNESCO and the national government concerned (the State Party), involving repeated political and economic negotiations between the State Party and UNESCO.

⁹ UNESCO (2005), Document WHC-05/15.GA/INF.7

UNESCO's structure

UNESCO's bureaucratic structure has a direct impact on its output. As an institution, UNESCO echoes other UN institutions in its operational set-up:

It operates on the basis of one state, one vote with the supreme governing body being the General Conference of Member States which meets every two years to elect the Executive Board, appoint the Director General, and admit new Member States. The day to day running of the organization is done by the Director General and his staff, the Secretariat. The basic structure of Unesco can be seen to exist as a tension between a permanent Secretariat of professional international bureaucrats, and the Member States in the National Commissions and National Delegates; a tension that can also be framed in terms of State Parties and Unesco bureaucrats, or even in terms of the sovereignty of the Member States versus the influence of the 'international community' represented through Unesco. (Fontein, 2000: 22)

The position of Director General is one of particular influence and can change the focus of the institution for the duration of the post and beyond. The current Director General, Koïchiro Matsuura, has been instrumental in driving forward the promotion of intangible cultural heritage and putting in place 'Japanese Funds in Trust' to financially support his vision.

UNESCO's work is dependent on a network of experts, working in centres across the world. This makes the study of UNESCO as an organisation particularly difficult:

The UNESCO headquarters are located in Paris. There are three expert bodies. One is based in Paris, France, one in Gland, Switzerland, and one in Rome, Italy. In addition, many other organisations are involved in World Heritage,

and the network is constantly expanding. When a state ratifies the convention, state institutions, organisations, and individuals locally, regionally and nationally are drawn in. Moreover, meetings and conferences regarding World Heritage take place in different places in all parts of the world. Both people and ideas travel across national and organisational borders. All these conditions make a qualitative study of World Heritage a complicated and challenging endeavour. Turtinen (2000: 8)

The *World Heritage Centre* was created in 1992 and is housed in its own building at the heart of the UNESCO complex in Paris. UNESCO's cultural division is divided into different sectors, which are fairly fluid and often change name or focus or are re-deployed or absorbed into each other. In 2007, the sectors were Cultural Diversity, World Heritage, Tangible Heritage, Intangible Heritage, Normative Action, Intercultural Dialogue, Cultural Industries, Arts and Creativity, Copyright, Museums and Cultural Tourism. Different sectors within the cultural division may grow and gain prestige, as was the case for the World Heritage sector, which was once housed within the Tangible Heritage sector. From its inception, the World Heritage List has been a great success as governments have responded enthusiastically to UNESCO's call for candidates and the programme has received high profile media attention. This success has meant that not only did the sector gain its autonomy and acquire its own building but the *Tangible Heritage* sector is now being absorbed into the World Heritage sector, in a case of the child eclipsing the parent. Each sector therefore has a vested interest in its own promotion to ensure its survival and attract the institution's funds to its cause.

As well as its permanent staff, UNESCO relies on a large number of external experts (for example ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, an

independent body of experts that acts as judge for the Candidature Files or *Dossiers de Candidatures* for inclusion the World Heritage List) and also always employs a large number of unpaid interns. It is very difficult for staff to get a permanent position in UNESCO, especially if the person is from a country categorised as over-represented. Each country is either under-represented, represented or over-represented. These categories are regularly reviewed and are dependent on the number of staff from each member state holding posts at the different levels of the organisation. Consequently, there are difficulties in promotion to different levels of the UNESCO hierarchy, as appointment of posts somewhat depend upon the 'represented' status of your country at the time. As a result, people from under-represented countries find themselves fast-tracked up the ranks.

The influence of UNESCO's prestigious location in Paris cannot be underestimated. Like other United Nations staff, UNESCO permanent employees benefit from subsidized living, including housing, education and a duty-free shop housed within the UNESCO complex. Many of the offices have commanding views over the Eiffel Tower and Parisian skyline, and it would be fair to say that once obtained, there is very little incentive for a member of staff to give up a permanent post at UNESCO. As a consequence, it seems that UNESCO staff quickly become institutionalised and find it hard to question the practices of the institution from within.

UNESCO's history

Established on the 16th November 1945, UNESCO emerged as a response to World War II. It was partly founded on the model of the former *Conference of Allied Ministers of Education* (CAME), which had been established in London in 1942 (Imber, 1989: 98) and had brought together the interests of the Paris based

International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation and the Geneva based *International Bureau of Education*. At the heart of UNESCO lies the belief that the promotion of different global 'cultures' is key to global peace. UNESCO's constitution today still declares that its ambition is to "build peace in the minds of men"¹⁰, words first pronounced by the British Prime Minister Attlee addressing the new UNESCO conference in 1945.

As well as its cultural initiatives, UNESCO's remit includes projects concerning education (e.g. teacher training, literacy projects, the production of school text books) and social and natural sciences (e.g. press freedom, women's rights, climate change, international cooperation and dissemination of research). UNESCO works towards its overarching mission together with a series of shorter term targets and initiatives, such as the 2015 UN Millennium Development Goals¹¹. UNESCO is therefore a combination of a visionary body and a practical institution. In the domain of culture, it has the dual task of setting a future agenda as well as responding to the immediate needs of its member states.

The power balance between UNESCO and its member states is a complicated one.

While Turtinen (2000: 6) emphasises UNESCO's influence on nation states:

UNESCO is indeed a powerful producer of culture, and a highly influential actor, capable of defining and framing conditions, problems, and solutions, and thus framing the interests and desired actions of others, especially those of the world's nation-states.

¹⁰ "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the mind of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." Imber (1989: 98)

¹¹ www.un.org/millenniumgoals

Nation-states also have an influence on UNESCO. For example, in 1984 the United States withdrew its membership from the organisation, followed by United Kingdom's withdrawal in 1985 and Singapore withdrawal in 1986. The UK returned to UNESCO in 1997, the US in 2003 and Singapore in 2007. The US withdrawal in 1986 (taking place after the required 12 month notice period issued in 1985) was officially due to a critique of the agency's programme, budget, managerial style and competence (Imber, 1989: 96).

However, many contemporary observers thought that the US's threat to withdraw was merely a political ploy to gain greater influence within the organisation (Finn, 1986). Off the record, the US was becoming increasingly concerned with what it perceived as UNESCO's pro-Palestinian position. It was also concerned with a proposal entitled the *New World Information and Communication Order* (emerging as a recommendation of the UNESCO commissioned *MacBride Report*). This order was a series of proposals to help developing countries gain more control over the way they were represented in the global media. The US considered this a potential attack on press freedom.

Within UNESCO at the time therefore, the balance of power was seen to be shifting away from Western countries towards non-Western concerns. Furthermore, the US detected a politicisation of the institution towards areas that it did not consider to be within its remit, such as disarmament and issues of 'collective rights' eroding individual rights and freedoms recognised in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Imber, 1989: 109).

Despite its withdrawal, the US remained involved with UNESCO throughout the 1990s by making extra-budgetary financial contributions. Now it has returned to the

UNESCO fold, the US is once again the single biggest contributor to the UNESCO budget (22% in 2007, followed by Japan's 16.7%. In contrast, Mali contributes only 0.001% of the annual budget¹²). In 1995 the American President Clinton stated that substantial progress had been made in addressing the reasons for the US withdrawal but it took until 2003 for the US to officially rejoin UNESCO due to budgetary constraints. Another significant reason for the United States' re-appraisal of its position towards UNESCO was the perceived progress made by the institution under the two Director Generals who succeeded Amadou-Mahtar M'bow of Senegal, the director general at the helm at the time of US withdrawal (1974-1987). The first was the Spanish Frederico Mayor Zaragosa (1987-1999) and currently, the Japanese Director General, Koïchiro Matsuura, who took up his post in 1999.

These early struggles between UNESCO and its member states are important because they highlight some of the tensions still present in the institution today: the extent to which UNESCO is biased towards Western concerns, the economic clout of the richer member states and their consequent ability to change the institution's focus, and the marginalisation of non-Western concerns, such as the *New World Information and Communication Order*. The fact that the US and UK withdrawals happened under an African Director General is also of enduring symbolic significance¹³.

Furthermore, the power balance within UNESCO is illustrated by the fact that richer Western member states are more likely than poorer non-Western ones to opt out of any initiative that they see as a threat to their national sovereignty such as the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, described below.

¹² Document 34C presented at the General Conference, 34th Session in Paris, 2007.

¹³ Personal communication, June 2004

The US and Australia have refused to be signatories to the Convention, and one might suspect this is due to the Convention's promotion of the collective rights of indigenous people. The UK has also refused to be a signatory as it does not think that is it useful to separate tangible and intangible heritage when seeking to protect cultural heritage¹⁴. The US, Australia and the UK are all at liberty to opt out of the Convention as they are not in any way dependent on the funds that the Convention has put in place for participating poorer member states. UNESCO is therefore a global institution and contains within it all the economic, political and social power imbalances existing on the outside. It is also an ideological institution and much of its founding ideology has come from Western intellectual concerns.

UNESCO's concept of culture

The early foundational texts for UNESCO's concept of culture were in part based on commissioned writings by Claude Lévi-Strauss and Michel Leiris. In an interview with Didier Eribon to mark Lévi-Strauss' eightieth birthday (Eribon, 1988), Levi-Strauss describes the central theme of his commissioned work *Race et Histoire*:

D.E. In 1952 with the text *Race et Histoire*, you left the perspective of pure social anthropology to position yourself at the level that can be called 'political', which touched in any case directly on contemporary problems.

C.L-S. It was a commission. I don't think I would have written the work myself on my own initiative.

D.E. How did this commission arise?

¹⁴ Personal communication, member of the British Delegation at UNESCO in Paris, June 2004

C.L-S. UNESCO asked a number of authors to write a series of booklets on the racial question: Michel Leiris was one, I was another...

D.E. There you affirm the diversity of cultures, you put into question the idea of progress, and you proclaim the necessity of 'coalition' between cultures.

C.L-S. In general, I was seeking to reconcile the notion of progress with cultural relativism. The notion of progress implies the idea that certain cultures, at given times or in given places, are superior to others, because they have produced works which those others have shown themselves incapable of. And cultural relativism, which is one of the basis of anthropological thought...contends that there can be no absolute criterion for judging one culture as superior to another. I tried to shift the problem's centre of gravity.

Claude Levi-Strauss¹⁵ was one of a few key people drawn upon in the early days of UNESCO to define the institution's remit and focus concerning culture. He identified a tension between universalism and relativism, one that continues to provoke lively debate today (Eriksen, 2001). However, it cannot be said that through its work UNESCO maintains a consistent position on culture, relativism and rights, as its output is vast and varied and continues to change. In fact, pinning down UNESCO's position on 'culture' is almost always an indirect process, mediated through the prism of its writings, programmes and conventions.

¹⁵ His son, Laurent Levi-Strauss, is currently the Chief of Sector for Tangible Heritage and Deputy Director for the Division of Cultural Heritage at UNESCO.

In terms of working definitions, UNESCO has defined cultural heritage in its Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention¹⁶) as:

Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of *outstanding universal value* from the point of view of history, art or science; groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of *outstanding universal value* from the point of view of history, art or science; sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of *outstanding universal value* from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view. (my italics)

More recently, it has defined intangible cultural heritage in the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*¹⁷ as:

The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, *transmitted* from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them

¹⁶ For full text see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

¹⁷ For full text see <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index>

with a *sense of identity and continuity*, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. (my italics)

In the case of the World Heritage Convention therefore, the emphasis is on 'outstanding universal value'. In the case of intangible heritage, however, the emphasis is on transmission, identity and continuity.

UNESCO's most complete recent statement on its vision of culture comes in the form of a publication entitled *Our Creative Diversity* (produced by the World Commission on Culture and Development, UNESCO: 1995). The document deals with the issue of culture and development and advocates that culture should not be seen as a facilitator of development but instead development should be seen as part of culture. It also champions 'cultural freedom' which it sees as a collective, and not an individual right. Eriksen (2001: 133) broadly welcomes the statement, while noting that in reference to cultural rights, *Our Creative Diversity* falls short of what could be expected from UNESCO:

To simply state...that one is favourable to cultural rights simply will not do...it is not self-evident what the term means, nor how it articulates with individual human rights.

Similarly, Susan Wright (1998: 13) does not feel that the document adequately deals with the potential contradictions between human rights and cultural diversity:

UNESCO's vision of a code of global ethics to order a plural world rests on a contradiction between respecting all cultural values and making value judgments about acceptable and unacceptable diversity.

UNESCO's World Heritage Project at first glance may seem somewhat removed from these direct ethical considerations, yet I will argue throughout this thesis that these considerations exist at its heart. *Our Creative Diversity* (WCCD, 1996: 4) states:

Finally, freedom is central to culture, and in particular the freedom to decide what we have reason to value, and what lives we have reason to seek. One of the most basic needs is to be left free to define our own basic needs.

If freedom is central to culture, then the protection of Djenné as a World Heritage site may need radical re-thinking. In Djenné, the tension between self definition and the protection of cultural heritage imposed by its World Heritage status is palpable and leading to a 'UNESCO debate' within the town. This debate takes on many forms and happens at different levels. For those educated *Djennenkés* (teachers, civil servants...) who have a good understanding of UNESCO's global activities, it often leads to resentment as they feel that UNESCO should either get more directly involved with the protection of Djenné's cultural heritage or not have a say in the matter. For many *Djennenkés* who have a lesser understanding of UNESCO's remit, there is the general feeling of being let down after the initial excitement of having being declared a World Heritage site in 1988. Rightly or wrongly, people in Djenné expected to see positive changes (in practice meaning better economic conditions) occurring in Djenné after its inclusion on the World Heritage List. Many *Djennenkés* therefore question the wisdom of being on the World Heritage List if the consequences are a curtailment of their rights to self-definition without visible economic benefits.

The World Heritage List

Following UNESCO's adoption in 1972 of the '*Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage*' (widely known as the World Heritage

Convention), a 'World Heritage List' was begun in 1978 to identify and protect sites of 'outstanding universal value' throughout the world. To date the convention has been signed by more than 150 states known as 'state parties' (Hitchcock, 2005). The decision was taken to adopt a common approach to both natural and cultural heritage:

The *World Heritage List* links the concept of nature conservation with site preservation. For the purposes of the Convention, these are treated as complementary ideas relating cultural identity associated with sites to the natural environment in which they occur (Magness-Gardiner, 2004: 29)

As of July 2007, there are 851 properties inscribed on the list, of which 660 are cultural, 166 are natural and 25 are mixed sites¹⁸. Only 71 of these sites can be found in sub-Saharan Africa, leading to the launch in 2006 of an 'Africa Fund' to help African State Parties prepare national inventories and nomination dossiers (known as Candidature Files or *Dossier de Candidature*). A World Heritage Committee, consisting of 21 elected members of the State Parties to the convention is responsible for the day to day running and assessment of the programme (Turtinen, 2000: 11). The 1972 World Heritage Convention was the first convention to enshrine into international legislation the concept of 'common heritage of humanity' yet it has to respect national sovereignty, and comes second to property rights provided by national legislation. Consequently, as will be described below, the World Heritage Convention is unable to protect the common heritage of humanity through direct intervention.

¹⁸ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>

The Euro-centricity of the World Heritage project has been widely commented upon (see, for example Cleere (2001) and Eriksen (2001) for a discussion). The list has so far favoured monumental buildings and seems to articulate the cultural superiority of Europe through its archaeological and architectural heritage, leaving big parts of the world under-represented. The criterion of 'outstanding universal value' is the one criterion that unites all the World Heritage sites found on UNESCO's World Heritage List. It has long been problematic and subject to different and changing interpretations as its definition cannot be found in the World Heritage Convention itself but in its operational guidelines and is thus subject to constant review (Titchen, 1996).

Becoming a World Heritage Site

World Heritage sites are chosen by UNESCO and a panel of experts drawn from international heritage organisations:

ICOMOS is named in the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention as one of the three formal advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee, along with the World Conservation Union (IUCN), based at Gland (Switzerland), and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), based in Rome (Italy). It is the professional and scientific advisor to the World Heritage Committee on all aspects of the cultural heritage. It takes part in the work of the World Heritage Committee and in the implementation of the Convention¹⁹.

The inscription of a site on the World Heritage List is therefore given authority through the judgement of international expert bodies. It is not enough for a national

¹⁹ From the ICOMOS website: www.international.icomos.org

government (State Party) to put forward a site of national importance for inscription, it must be judged against an international standard of heritage value, embodied by a network of experts:

All new nominations are to be sent by States Parties to the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO, in Paris by 1st February each year. UNESCO officials check the elaborate nomination dossiers for completeness and deliver them to ICOMOS by 15 March, where they are handled by the officials of ICOMOS International Secretariat, who deal with World Heritage. At ICOMOS International Secretariat, the world heritage team studies the dossiers, in order to ascertain the nature of the property that is proposed, and the first action involved is the choice of the experts who are to be consulted. The process of selecting experts makes full use of the ICOMOS networking potential²⁰.

The candidature files are then examined through two different processes, the first involves judging the file against the criteria of 'outstanding universal value', the second involves a visit to the site by a regional expert who liaises with local heritage experts to discuss site management, tourism and development plans. Each examination process leads to a separate report, and the two reports are presented in September for final evaluation together with the original candidature file. Through a series of meetings with further international experts, recommendations are produced for each nominated site by ICOMOS to be put before the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in the April of the following year. Final decisions are made in June when summaries of each nominated site are presented to the full World Heritage Committee.

²⁰ From the ICOMOS website: www.international.icomos.org

It is clear therefore that even before a site becomes included on the World Heritage List, it is subject to scrutiny and a 'professionalizing' gaze. The aspects of the site that are most likely to appeal to the World Heritage Committee are emphasised, while others aspects may well be played down. In this sense, UNESCO acts as a 'global cultural broker' (Butler, 2007: 273). At the end of the process, the site is reduced to a simplified dossier, justifying its 'outstanding universal value' as well as making a case for inscription, often couched in terms of threats to its future survival. Although it is the State Party that officially puts forward the candidature file, in practice by the time of the decision of the World Heritage Committee, a large number of heritage professionals have become invested in the successful outcome of the dossier, and, if successful, many of them will be employed in the future to devise and oversee management plans of the various sites. Even at the very first stage of putting the original candidature file together, UNESCO officials will be involved in helping state parties, as was the case for the *Yaaral and Dégal* in Mali. It is therefore hard to argue that the primary relationship is that between a World Heritage site and its national government, and that UNESCO merely acts as a 'labelling' institution. Particularly in cases where the national governments lack economic and political power, World Heritage sites within their territories are subject to a high level of intervention (through UNESCO delegations visiting the site, management plans put in place by international experts, outside funding for the sites promotion...)

The concept of World Heritage

When considering the validity of the World Heritage project in Djenné, two broader aspects of the World Heritage Convention need to be addressed: first, the problems surrounding the term of 'outstanding universal value' and second, the concrete

consequences of World Heritage status on a site it claims to protect. In the afterword to his edited volume *The Politics of World Heritage*, Michael Hitchcock (2005: 181) states in reference to UNESCO's 1972 World Heritage Convention that:

Looking back over 30 years, it has become clear that the Convention lacked an important provision from the outset, the need to conduct research on how well the Convention was fulfilling its brief in scientific terms.

Due to political sensitivities and its bureaucratic nature, it is very difficult for UNESCO as an institution to question its practices. It is also difficult for UNESCO to define its 'scientific brief' when dealing with cultures, since outcomes are not as measurable as some of its other work, for example that concerning the protection of natural World Heritage sites. There is consequently, in the cultural sector at least, little impetus to put in place feedback mechanisms that would change the way in which UNESCO operates throughout the world. During my internship, I witnessed that the bureaucratic nature of working practices within UNESCO meant that the speed at which it could respond to events or new challenges was inevitably greatly reduced. As a way of circumventing the bureaucracy, new initiatives are constantly launched leading to the addition of new categories and programmes instead of a more pragmatic revising and streamlining approach to its past activities.

Recently, new programmes within UNESCO have included intangible heritage and heritage landscapes (Fontein, 2000). This shift in focus away from the tangible towards a broader definition of culture may be thought of as one in a long line of reactions UNESCO has had to the changing political climates it finds itself in. Taking the long view on UNESCO's protection of heritage, Blake (2000: 62) states that:

It is worth noting that the three Conventions so far adopted by UNESCO reflect the political and/or intellectual concerns of the time at which they were developed: the 1954 Convention expressed the powerful post-World War II desire to reduce potential sources of international conflict; the 1970 Convention embodied an approach to cultural property which might be characterised as “nationalist” or “statist”.... And the 1972 Convention reflected both the growing concern in environmentalist issues in its integration of the cultural with the natural heritage as well as the concept of “common heritage of mankind” which had been developing at this time in relation to seabed mineral resources.

The concept of the ‘Common Heritage of Mankind’ (CHM) has allowed for the development of a framework with which to discuss ownership rights to previously unclaimed, and potentially valuable resources, such as the ocean bed, outer space, the moon or Antarctica. In a discussion of the legal consequences of the concept, Joyner (1986) concludes that despite treaties emerging based on the concept, it remains a philosophical notion with only the potential to crystallize into a legal norm. Joyner attributes five characteristics to the concept of CHM as applied to common space areas: 1) They would be regarded as regions owned by no one but hypothetically managed by everyone; 2) All people would be expected to share in the management of a common space area and universal popular interest would assume priority over national interests; 3) Any economic benefit derived from extraction from the common space area would be shared internationally; 4) Use of the area must be limited to peaceful purposes; 5) Any research in the area would be freely and openly permissible on the condition that it posed no physical threat to the environment. It goes without saying that the concept of CHM in these cases is being applied to spaces devoid of people.

Applying the CHM concept to UNESCO's work on cultural heritage is problematic yet I will argue that the idea of the CHM is implicit within the World Heritage List. In fact, the idea of CHM has percolated down to some people in Djenné who logically conclude that CHM entails common responsibility and should mean a sharing of the financial burden of preservation. The CHM concept 'globalises' human identity by stating that there are places of importance to all of mankind that must be preserved for all of our futures. Building on the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Niec, 1998), the CHM discourse makes claims on behalf of our shared humanity and as such, distances itself from localised dissenting discourses. The CHM's universal vision justifies the fact that it sometimes ignores relativist realities.

The concept of CHM is useful as it clarifies the World Heritage Convention's *raison d'être*: to pass on to future generations its true *héritage*, in the French sense, meaning inheritance. No part of the 'global family' may unilaterally decide to do away with that which has been recognised as important by the whole. That said, World Heritage sites remain under the jurisdiction of individual nation states who may appeal to the global community for help in their protection but who may also, as was the case in Afghanistan, destroy them.

The limits of UNESCO's protection of cultural heritage

O'Keefe (2004) describes the World Heritage Convention as a treaty with no third party effects on third parties unwilling to be drawn in. He explores this statement in relation to the actions undertaken by the *Taliban* at Bamiyan in Afghanistan. At the time of the destruction, Bamiyan was not yet a World Heritage site. Somewhat controversially UNESCO declared Bamiyan a World Heritage site in July 2003 in an 'emergency inscription' after the destruction of the Buddhas in March 2001.

Although the destructions of the Buddhas at Bamiyan²¹ were described by United Nations state parties as a 'grave wrong', an 'act of cultural vandalism' and 'sacrilege to humanity' (O'Keefe, 2004: 200) no legal intervention could be mounted against the Taliban regime as the statues were not destroyed during warfare but deliberately, during a time of peace. As a response to the destruction, UNESCO adopted a resolution concerning '*Acts constituting a crime against common heritage of humanity*' (Manhart, 2001). In defiance the Taliban passed an edict in 2001 ordering the destruction of all statues and non-Islamic shrines. This met with overwhelming international condemnation but again no reference was made to violation of the World Heritage Convention obligations. The Convention does not set out a law but behavioural guidelines:

All in all, the relevant State practice attests to a remarkable universal consensus that the destruction of the Buddhas at Bamiyan was condemnable as a matter of policy, being harmful to the interests of the Afghan people and to humanity as a whole. But none of it supports the conclusion that a State is presently under a customary legal obligation, in times of peace, to protect, conserve and transmit to future generations cultural heritage situated on its territory either straightforwardly or as a function of a human right. (O'Keefe, 2004: 205)

In other cases, such as in Cambridge, England, the invitation to apply for World Heritage status was turned down as the town was already considered adequately protected by the University (van der Aa *et al.*, 2005). Similarly, the resistance of many stakeholders to putting forward a candidature file for World Heritage status for the Dutch part of the Wadden Sea is described by the authors as 'World Heritage as

²¹ See Warikoo, K., ed (2002) *Bamiyan: Challenge to World Heritage*, New Dehli: Bhavana Books & Prints. for a full discussion of the events.

NIMBY' (not in my back yard) (van der Aa *et al.*, 2005). The resistance was based on fears over loss of independence and uncertainty around what World Heritage status would entail. As the authors (2005: 18) put it:

Wherever 'heritage' exists, pressure to share it with outsiders and higher status outsiders at that, is likely to be present.

In Djenné, the cultural heritage is invariably shared with higher status outsiders and most residents will not have the opportunity to visit, or have any influence upon cultural heritage in other parts of the world, or even in their own country. There is therefore a radical asymmetry to the way in which people participate in the World Heritage Project. Furthermore, the impact of World Heritage status on local populations can actually be negative. Wall and Black (2005) describe how local populations have been displaced from sites such as Borobudur and Prambanan near the city of Yogyakarta in Indonesia to make way for archaeological parks. In order to gain access to the tourists and the money they bring, local people now have to pay for access to the sites. In this case, the placing of a *cordon sanitaire* around the sites effectively excludes local people from their own cultural heritage and potential income it represents.

Ambivalence towards UNESCO's World Heritage project may therefore include its perceived powerlessness in times of real crisis, the consequences of allowing one's heritage to be considered the 'heritage of humanity' (especially if much of that humanity has a higher status and more power than the local population) and fears over access to heritage. However in Djenné, the situation is further complicated by the fact that much of the population has not heard of, or does not accurately understand who or what UNESCO is. Furthermore, as will be discussed later,

Djennenkés understand outside intervention within a paradigm of poverty and expectations of development, leaving many people who are aware of UNESCO's labelling of the town perplexed as to UNESCO's lack of helpful practical intervention. Although it cannot be seen as UNESCO's original intention, the fact that Djenné has been declared a World Heritage site has set-up a number of expectations amongst some *Djennenkés* who do not understand the complexities of the World Heritage inscription process. For them, if the town is to be protected in the name of UNESCO and 'World Heritage', then money should flow to the town in an attempt to help them preserve that heritage.

Intangible Heritage and Outstanding Universal Value

In recognition of the importance of intangible heritage, and in part due to the enthusiasm of the Director General, UNESCO launched the *Proclamations of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* (henceforth the Proclamations). The Proclamations reflect concerns about the validation of non-monumental, non-elitist heritage. They were launched by UNESCO in 1997 and are a logical next step in UNESCO's portfolio of measures to validate and protect global cultural heritage. However, the Proclamations have shed new light on the difficulty of defining the term 'outstanding universal value' and I will argue that UNESCO should learn from these difficulties and apply the lessons to its original World Heritage Project.

The Proclamations were at first intended to do for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) what the World Heritage List did for tangible cultural and natural heritage. Three

Proclamations, taking place between 2001 and 2005, saw the inscription of 90 'Masterpieces' on a new global list drawn up by UNESCO²². In each case, the inscription procedure for the Proclamations echoed that of the World Heritage List, with member states submitting candidature files to be considered by an international panel of experts. However, in 2006, UNESCO decided to discontinue any further Proclamations and instead set up a 'Representative List' drawn from member state's own inventories of ICH. Officially, this decision was due to the coming into force of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* in April 2006. UNESCO states that the Proclamations were only ever intended to be an awareness-raising exercise and were never to be an on-going list like the World Heritage List. Yet it can be argued that behind the decision to abandon the criterion of 'outstanding universal value' in relation to ICH (and consequently any further Proclamation) lie a number of practical difficulties confronted by UNESCO.

Partly, there was a realisation within UNESCO of the difficulty of assigning a static cultural value to changing expressions of cultural life, such as those expressed through ICH. There was an awareness that the approach chosen to protect ICH had to be different from that used to protect tangible cultural heritage and that the usual exercises of documentation would not suffice. Additionally, the criterion of 'outstanding universal value' proved problematic in relation to ICH since the ICH that lends meaning to people's lives is rarely 'outstanding' or 'universal' and most often is commonplace, such as language or regular cultural performances. This lack of definition led to a huge diversity in the kinds of candidature files put forward by member states, ranging from national cuisine to singing, specialised craft, festivals

²² www.unesco.org/culture/intangible-heritage

and minority activities. A concrete measurement of 'value' could therefore not be achieved by UNESCO in relation to ICH because the value they were trying to protect was that embodied by the human actors themselves and therefore highly personal. Performances, cultural spaces and endangered languages proved to be moving targets and, as cultural expressions rather than cultural artefacts, much harder for UNESCO to archive. This re-assessment in relation to ICH can be used to identify the difficulties encountered by UNESCO's original World Heritage Project, especially in cases where the restrictions imposed by World Heritage status directly affect people's everyday lives.

Conclusion

When considering its activities in Mali, UNESCO's institutional structure and unique history needs to be kept in mind. UNESCO's actions around the world are responses to numerous conversations and negotiations going on within the organisation. An internship within UNESCO allowed me to have access to the internal conversations surrounding intangible heritage and consequently led me to re-think the term 'universal cultural value' in relation to tangible heritage. Categories and definitions that may at first appear self-explanatory are in fact subject to constant change and often hide political agendas or economic aspirations. The 'outstanding universal value' concept present in UNESCO's original attempts to protect cultural heritage is starting to look outdated when cultural heritage is recast as a dynamic process of transmission leading to cultural pride and cohesion. UNESCO's increasingly sophisticated understanding of this process of transmission is being mirrored by a number of its initiatives, that started with World Heritage, but has rapidly moved on to the recognition of Cultural Landscapes, Intangible Heritage and now 'Living

Human Treasures'²³. UNESCO is therefore increasingly putting people at the centre of its vision of cultural heritage.

In the following chapter, an ethnographic approach to cultural heritage in Djenné will reveal some of the 'spaces' where UNESCO's World Heritage Project intersects with *Djennenkés'* lives. UNESCO's impact on Djenné is not uniform and sometimes contradictory and unexpected. Other parts of the town's cultural life largely overlooked by UNESCO, such as religious, political and economic affiliations and constraints sometimes come into direct conflict with UNESCO's vision for the future of Djenné.

²³ See www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index then safeguarding/transmission/living human treasures.

3 Locating heritage through ethnography

The rationale behind attempting an 'ethnography of heritage' is an endeavour to understand UNESCO's perceived presence in Djenné through contextualising it within the political, social, religious and economic reality of the town. Unlike a more traditional ethnographic approach, focussing on issues relating to cultural heritage tends to mean focussing on areas of conflict, misunderstanding or absence. Simple questions such as 'who is implicated in UNESCO's World Heritage Project in Djenné?' raise a number of complex issues. What this approach aims to achieve is the beginnings of a local conceptualisation of Djenné and its cultural heritage.

Life in Djenné is synonymous with poverty. Despite initial impressions, it seems that people's unique cultural heritage is often not redemptive, and can in some cases be seen to hinder their ambitions. UNESCO is acting in concrete ways in Djenné while a majority of the population remain disenfranchised from UNESCO's World Heritage Project. What emerges from fieldwork is a complex picture of a population negotiating access to its material culture, while attempting to maintain its dignity and autonomy, all the while navigating traditional power structures and the new realities brought by tourism.

Islam in Djenné

It is estimated that 90% of the Malian population is Muslim, around 1% Christian and the other 9% Animist or of other religion²⁴. According to Soares (2005), the international community, more specifically the Americans, are becoming concerned

²⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>, page accessed December 2007.

with the rise of political Islam in Mali, particularly post the event of September 11th 2001. Whereas Mali was regarded as a bulwark against radical Islam (especially due to its borders with Mauritania and Algeria), it is now being described as a potential breeding ground for Islamic fundamentalists (Soares, 2005: 78), a theme most recently taken up by Le Vine.

Le Vine (2007) states that although Islam was brought to Mali during the 7th Century through the Arab conquest of North Africa, it did not become the majority religion in the country until the 20th Century. Until the later part of 19th Century, Malian leaders saw Islam as an elite culture worth supporting. Similarly, during colonialism, the 'Algerian Model' of indirect rule was used as inspiration for French West Africa by the colonial authorities who made agreements with the Sufi Brotherhoods. La Vine reports that two researchers sent by the French into the African field, Delafosse and Marty, wrote about the Muslim brotherhoods as forces of peace and stability (Le Vine, 2007: 82).

After Independence in 1960, Mobido Keita avoided antagonizing religious leaders, many of whom were from the *Malinké* ethnic area that made up his key constituency. After Moussa Traoré's coup in 1968, ever closer links were sought between the government and Muslim leaders. However, as the regime became more oppressive, a number of *marabouts* fled the country. Amadou Toumani Touré's accession to power on March 26th 1991 and the subsequent democratic election of Alpha Oumar Konaré in 1992 saw the rise of Islam in Mali through the flourishing of civic associations, a significant number of which had Islamist agendas. Gradually, the Islamic agenda in Mali took on more formal incarnations, such as the opening of a privately owned Islamic radio stationed in Bamako in 1992 and the creation of a 'High Islamic Council',

a body that was intended to represent the views of the Islamic Associations and the Mosques. In 2002, Amadou Toumani Toure won the Presidential elections as an Independent candidate and once again seemed to be adequately representing the religious views of the Malian people:

By and large, Islam and democracy have found a relatively frictionless relationship in the post 1991 political environment, due in part to a political culture already accustomed to a pragmatic state-religion accommodation. (Le Vine, 2007: 90)

The challenge for the Malian government today is identified by Le Vine as dealing with the rise of *Wahhabism*, a part of the *Salafiyya* movement of Muslims that promotes a return to original beliefs and practices of the *Salaf* - the 'founding fathers' of Islam. Militant groups to East and North of Mali have led the Malian Government to obtain international help with anti-terrorist training as it was the 'Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat' (also known as GSPC) that broke away from the Algerian *Groupe Islamiste Armée* in 1998 (a group reported to be involved in kidnapping of 32 tourists in 2003 on the Malian/Algerian border).²⁵

However, Soares (2005) argues that current day internal debates about Islam in Mali have their roots in ongoing contradictions and negotiations. He identifies a number of 'juxtapositions' co-existing in modern day Mali, including Islamic radio, traditional medicine, fetishism, gambling and South American soap operas.

²⁵ At the time of writing (December 2007), a fragile ceasefire has been agreed as a result of a second 'Tuareg Rebellion', which began in September 2007 in Northern Mali, influenced in great part by the Tuareg uprising going on in neighbouring Niger (concerning rights over uranium). The first Tuareg Rebellion in Mali started in 1990 and ended with a ceasefire in 1995. Weapons were symbolically destroyed and incorporated into a monument in Timbuktu called '*La Flame de la Paix*' (the Flame of Peace). Up to date information can be found at www.jeuneafrique.com

In Djenné, the ongoing importance of the *marabouts* and Koranic ‘vestibule’ schools seems to have guarded against radical Islam. Soares contextualises Islam in Mali:

Mali is a place where Islam has been practiced for at least a millennium. Islam is incredibly important here, which is not to say that all Malians are Muslims. Although Mali is overwhelmingly Muslim, there is no uniform way of being Muslim. However, Islam has a central place in the social and historical imagination in Mali. Malians regularly make reference to such renowned centers of Islamic learning in the country as Timbuktu and Djenné. (Soares, 2005: 79)

Although a behavioural conservatism is increasingly being demanded by more radical Muslims in Bamako, for example with reference to nightclub and bar closures (Soares, 2005), Djenné’s conservatism stems from its long history and the authority of its elders. In the past, a large number of older informants had avoided going to school as resistance to the colonial regime. *L’école des blancs* (the white man’s school) was considered by many, until about twenty years ago, as a way of indoctrinating Djenné’s children against traditional Islamic values. Now, most children who go to school in Djenné will attend Koranic school in the mornings for an hour and then attend French school (now known as *l’école classique*, previously known as *l’école des blancs*) for the rest of the day. Some children exclusively attend French school although it is rare to find a child who has never been to a Koranic school, if only as a young child for a few years.

Koranic schools or *vestibule* schools in Djenné are distinguished from *médersas* schools, where a whole Arabic curriculum is taught. There are only a handful of *médersas* schools in Djenné due in large part to the resistance of the elders to such an

education. In interviews, older men told me that because children learn Arabic at *médersas* and can therefore read and understand the Koran, they can question their elders' religious interpretations and would inevitably become 'impolite'. Belonging in Djenné I was told meant participating in religious life through prayer and this you could learn adequately at the *vestibule* schools, where the Koran is learnt off-by-heart but not understood (Diakite, 1999). Both boys and girls attend these schools early in the morning and they were often described to me as a sort of *kindergarten* where young children learn to concentrate and sit still. Teachers at the *écoles classiques* therefore see no contradiction in pupils having both kinds of education. Some pupils who prove themselves to be very capable at the *vestibule* schools will carry on attending until they are much older and some may do so to the exclusion of French education to become *marabouts* themselves. Only at this stage will the whole meaning of the Koran be revealed to them. A desire for more *médersas* schools, usually funded by Arabic countries, is present amongst some of the population in Djenné, such as *marabouts*. However, these schools remain in the minority.

Islamic morality and values in Djenné are maintained by the presence of the *marabouts*. Even people who may seem to align themselves with Western or 'modern' traditions and dress, such as the owner of the 'American Shop' on the main market square, are critical of overtly un-Islamic behaviour and dress amongst tourists. The American Shop owner explained that this behaviour was not appropriate in Djenné as: "Ici, c'est un coin de *marabouts*" (this is a *marabouts'* town). There is complete respect for the *marabouts* in Djenné and many parents confided their ambitions that their child would one day become a *marabout*.

The *marabouts* make a living from Djenné's historic reputation as a powerful Islamic town. Some are paid to pray on behalf of their rich patrons in other towns. Mahamane is a recently married *marabout* in his early thirties. He contracted polio very young, probably around the age of two because he has no memories of walking. He now gets around Djenné with the help of an adapted bicycle. His main income comes from a rich businessman in Bamako who pays him monthly to say benedictions on his behalf. The businessman does not have the time to properly attend to the spiritual dimension of his life as he regularly works until the early hours of the morning. He also does not have Mahamane's knowledge of the Koran. Perhaps paradoxically, the more the businessman has problems, the more money he pays Mahamane.

Before becoming a *marabout*, Mahamane trained to be a teacher and successfully studied in Bamako. Due to his disability, he found it impossible to work, and has been officially unemployed since 1990. He tried unsuccessfully to get a job with '*Handicap International*' and finally decided to become a *marabout*. He feels very lucky that his occupation provides him with a regular income because many disabled people in Mali are destined for a life of begging. His income allowed him to get married, despite the original scepticism of the bride's family.

Mahamane comes from one of over thirty big *marabout* families in Djenné (*Familles Maraboutiques*). He says that in Djenné, everyone is 'a bit of a *marabout*' ('*un peu marabout*'), as everyone learns the Koran. However, there are gradations of *marabouts*, starting as a student and going on to become a *Grand Marabout* and finally, Imam. You cannot become an Imam without first being a *Grand Marabout*.

A few of the *marabouts* in Djenné are 'sponsored' by rich Saudi Arabians who see them as worthy recipients of the *Zakah* (alms giving relating to a fixed proportion of

income, the Third Pillar of Islam). In Djenné, the understanding of the *Zakah* is that you should give 25 out of 1000 CFA (£1) you earn once you earn over 400,000 CFA (£400). Traditional readings of the Koran are accompanied in Djenné by more syncretic practices, such as the use of holy water or '*eau bénite*'. Koranic writing, rolled up and contained within *gris-gris*, or amulets, (described in Chapter 5) are ubiquitous in Djenné. The practice of sacrificing a chicken with the blessing of a *marabout* to ensure luck during a football match or other event is also common. This happens both when people are themselves playing or to support a favourite international team whose match is broadcast on television. When people are ill, they often turn to traditional healers. One remedy I witnessed involved mixing the dissolved Koranic chalk writing from a little blackboard with chicken and cooking it to give relief from malaria.

Mommersteeg (2000) distinguishes between the different uses of Koranic writing employed to undertake '*maraboutage*' in Djenné. The *tira* is the use of Koranic writing and symbols on paper made into *gris-gris*. The *nesi* is the 'water amulet', the use of dissolved Koranic writing as described above; and the *dugu* is a 'fire amulet', burning either a piece of Koranic writing or throwing a 'water amulet' on burning embers. When anger erupts in Djenné, as is described in relation to the guide test in Chapter 6, some people will resort to threats of witchcraft. Powerful spirits are said to inhabit Djenné and grown men will not walk through certain parts of the town at night through fear of provoking bad luck.

Mahamane is aware that Muslims in other parts of the world do not approve of what he refers to as their 'traditional' or 'conservative' practices. He says these practices have been passed down to the *marabouts* in Djenné today by their fore-fathers, the

first converts to Islam in Djenné. He describes their differences in the approach to Islam as being like the differences in the Christian Church between Catholicism and the Church of England and does not see any contradictions in his syncretic practices. He does however feel that there is un-Islamic behaviour present in Djenné, particular in the dress and attitude of young women.

Syncretism also finds its way into medical practices in Djenné. Imperato (1989) notes a decrease of traditional medicine practices with the rise of Islam in Mali and states that the use of traditional practitioners correlates strongly with education (the more educated a person is, the less likely they are to turn to traditional practitioners). Speaking with a traditional medical practitioner in Djenné, I was told that there were certain ailments for which he could do little, such as typhoid or malaria, whereas he was proficient in other areas, such as bone-setting. As well as education, it is certainly true that the cost of visiting the hospital in Djenné was a disincentive to many, even richer, patients. In many cases, both traditional and modern medical systems seemed to be employed at once, usually starting with the cheaper traditional practitioner.

The influence of radical Islam does not yet seem to be a problem in Djenné, despite some signs that may seem ominous from the outside, such as t-shirts of Osama Bin Laden for sale at the Monday market. There is an awareness of the negative consequences of being associated with radical Islam simply through being Muslim, and the potential ramifications this may have on tourism. Of great concern for many young men were the limitations that new anti-terror legislation was going to have on their ambitions to travel to the West. Among some young boys, there seemed to be some confusion about the meaning of t-shirts such as those depicting Osama Bin Laden. Although on the one hand Osama Bin Laden serves as a symbol of a freedom

fighter defending Islam against the West, the same young boys are also heavily influenced by American hip-hop culture and embrace what they see as African American culture. This influence on young boys becomes most visible when they organise themselves into groups, often in conflict with one another, described below.

One association in Djenné that is working to preach moderate Islam is the *Association Malienne pour le Soutien de l'Islam* (AMSI) an a-political, pan African association. It calls for people to respect other religions and find true Islam. It rejects terrorism and works to protect Islam's good name as a religion of peace. In Djenné, it is trying to find solutions to the problem of begging *garibous*. The Association also works to encourage people to become Muslim. The members of AMSI meet every three months and discuss the celebration of upcoming religious festivals as well as their principal celebrations in Bamako. A political Islamic group operating in Djenné is the Malian Association for Unity and the Progress of Islam (AMUPI). Nationwide, the AMUPI funds restoration work on Islamic buildings.

The most potent symbol of Islam in Djenné is the Mosque that dominates the town's cityscape. It is the emblem that makes Djenné world famous. Unlike Sénoussa, a Peul village a few kilometres from Djenné that has two Mosques, Djenné only has one Mosque (see Chapter 6 for a discussion of the first two Mosques in Djenné) and the whole town is united in its praise and protection. The yearly *crépissage* celebrations described in Chapter 7 are just one way in which every member of the community physically renews the Mosque and ensures its survival. Some disagreements have arisen between the Imam, who would like to beautify the Mosque through the addition of gold cupolas and tiles, and the Cultural Mission, whose job it is to ensure

that no material changes are made to the ‘monument’²⁶. When the issue of adding a metal gate to the front of the Mosque (to stop animals from gaining access) was raised, a compromise was made between the Cultural Mission and the Imam, and wooden gates were chosen to better fit with the Mosque’s aesthetic. It seems therefore that the future of the Mosque is ensured by local, national and international commitment and flexibility.

However, the disagreement between the Imam and the Cultural Mission does demonstrate the way in which the town’s identity as an Islamic centre is secondary for UNESCO, whose first conceptualisation of Djenné is as an architectural masterpiece. Furthermore, Djenné’s archaeology, being pre-Islamic cultural heritage, is of little immediate emotional appeal for most *Djennenkés*, whereas for UNESCO it is one of the two reasons why Djenné was declared a World Heritage site.

The attitudes of Djenné’s *marabouts* towards outside criticism of their syncretic practices demonstrates a fundamentally secure Islamic identity, based on the practices passed on from the earliest *marabouts* in Djenné. Djenné’s resistance to *médersas* can similarly be seen to be a resistance to outside destabilising forces.

Political organisation

De Jorio (2003) argues that French Colonial experience in Mali has been represented differently by subsequent political regimes. First, the socialist regime of Mobido Keita and his party the *Union Soudanaise du Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (USRDA, 1960-1968), then the military dictatorship of Moussa Traoré and the *Union*

²⁶ An agreement has now been put in place that stipulates that the Cultural Mission will pay 1 million CFA (£1,000) every year towards the *crépissage* to the *Chef du Village*, who then redistributes it to the *Djennenkés* via the *quartier* elders.

Démocratique du Peuple Malien (UDPM, 1968-1991), followed by the multiparty democracy of Alpha Oumar Konaré and *L'Association pour la Démocratie au Mali*, (ADEMA, 1992-2002). She describes Mali as a postcolonial nation constructed by its elites. Under Konaré, cultural heritage was put at the heart of all economic and social development initiatives (De Jorio, 2003: 832). As well as reinstituting the *Biennales* (described in the chapter 5), Konaré set out on an unprecedented investment in monumental art as a way of democratising culture. It was also in part due to a post-Independence effort at self-definition:

Mali's cultural politics should also be understood as an important effort, albeit at a symbolic level, toward reappropriation of the development strategies promoted by Western nations, international aid agencies, and international financial institutions.(De Jorio, 2003: 833)

Memorials and monuments sprung up all over Bamako during the Konaré years, such as a monument to commemorate Independence. De Jorio suggests that this memorialisation of history was in part an effort by the government to institutionalise history and undermine the traditional authority of the *griots* as repositories of the nation's historical knowledge (De Jorio, 2003: 833).

In Djenné, the link between politics and cultural heritage is apparent on different levels. On a national level, Djenné has been an important focus for successive governments attempting to create a narrative of the state due to its iconic archaeology and architecture. Locally, there is also a close link between political affiliation and attitudes towards the town's cultural heritage. For example *Djenné Patrimoine* was for a long time very closely associated with the ADEMA party, limiting its appeal to certain sectors of the population. It now has a more diverse membership. As will be

discussed in Chapter 7, the political affiliation of a Djennenké will heavily influence their attitude towards events such as the *Festival du Djennéry* which was initiated by the incoming *Mairie*, a multi-party association that had united under the new President Amadou Toumani Touré to dislodge the long domination of ADEMA in Mali and Djenné. In fact, different political affiliations are mentioned by many people in Djenné as the biggest barrier to co-operation between people in the town (see for example, the discussion of the sanitation project below). Local politics has also been transformed in recent years by the Government's long term commitment to decentralisation.

Decentralisation

Decentralisation is at the heart of a poverty reduction initiative undertaken in 2002 by the Malian Government (*Cadre Stratégique de Lutte Contre la Pauvreté* or CSLP). The process of decentralisation began in colonial times when the first four 'communes' were created: Bamako, Kayes, Mopti and Ségou. Since Independence, the number of communes has continued to rise, especially after 1996, and Mali is now divided into 703 communes, of which 607 are rural²⁷. The communes are the smallest political units in Mali. Communes are grouped into *cercles* and *cercles* into *régions* (including the District of Bamako). Each *région* elects 8 members of the *Haut Conseil des Collectivités Territoriales*. This Council is made up of 75 members, 8 for each of the eight regions in Mali, 8 for the District of Bamako and 3 representing Malian citizens overseas. The Council works with 7 other institutions to make up the Malian Republic: The President, the Government, the National Assembly, the Supreme Court,

²⁷ 'Décentralisation et la Réduction de la Pauvreté' *Rapport national 2003 sur le développement humain durable au Mali*, OHDH/UNDP.

the Constitutional Court, the High Court of Justice and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council.

In Djenné, elections are held at the commune level to choose the members of the *Conseil Communal* who in turn hold a secret ballot to elect a Mayor. Within an urban commune such as Djenné, the town is divided into '*quartiers*' and each quartier is represented by a *Chef de Quartier*, a traditional authority position. Other traditional authority structures such as the *Chef du Village* (an inherited position) and the Imam (a position invariably held by a member of one of the most prominent *Familles maraboutiques* of Djenné) compete to find their place within this new political structure. Communes have a certain level of political and economic autonomy which is intended to lead to more targeted resource allocation and a greater reduction of poverty. On a practical level, the distribution of money between the various political actors in Djenné has become very complex. This complexity leads to confusion as to where responsibility for the maintenance and development of Djenné's essential services lie.

Grass root organisations in Djenné

In Djenné, there seemed to be a *Groupe d'Intérêt Economique* (GIE) for every conceivable group: the women working in cleaning associations, the masons running the housing restoration project, young Islamic scholars maintaining the tanks for the sanitation project, the Guides who formed *Yérédeme* (literally translating as 'help yourself'), the hotels and restaurants (who formed the *Association pour le Développement de l'Activité Touristique, Culturelle et Artisanale de Djenné*) and the artisans. GIEs are corporate bodies that collect and manage funds on behalf of their members. Some of the *GIEs* are more successful than others in mobilising their

members and accumulating wealth. For example, the tourism GIE had little difficulty in raising money from its rich members (restaurant/hotel owners) to put on activities such as a *lutte traditionnelle* (traditional wrestling) to attract tourists. Others have been less successful, such as the women's cleaning GIE, that acquired equipment through the intermediary of a Peace Corps volunteer (buckets, brushes, a few carts) only to see it being redistributed by the authorities before it actually reached them.

The presence of numerous GIEs in Djenné attests to the fact that people know they must organise themselves in corporate bodies to lend legitimacy to their demands for help from the outside. The success of the GIEs in Djenné and the fact that they are regularly created and disbanded demonstrates how people are trying numerous strategies to elevate themselves out of poverty in a dignified manner. People are aware that in Djenné you need a cause to raise money, and the causes that seem to bring in money are health, education, women, sanitation and increasingly, cultural heritage projects.

A heritage organisation that describes itself as indigenous to Djenné is *Djenné Patrimoine*. It was founded by a Frenchman and is currently run by the head of one of Djenné's *Grandes Familles notables*, Papa Cissé. Its founding members were mostly drawn from the educated elite or guides and largely ADEMA supporters. However, this has changed over the years and a broader sample of the population is now represented within the organisation. *Djenné Patrimoine* can usefully be contrasted with the Cultural Mission as both organisations concern themselves with the preservation of heritage within the town. However, whereas the Cultural Mission is physically on the outside of town and operates principally through bureaucratic

measures, *Djenné Patrimoine* is physically located in the heart of the town and very much gets involved in local issues.

Most people in Djenné depend on money and resources coming from the outside. This happens in a myriad of ways beyond GIEs. For example in 2005 sources of outside help included, amongst many others: a Government rice distribution project, a privately funded rice distribution project (Jean-Louis Bourgeois), the housing restoration project, the sanitation project, a UNICEF baby milk project, the Cuban doctor scheme, money sent from migrant workers, money from Arabic countries, Peace Corps funded volunteers, tourism and sponsorship for the First Djenné Festival. Resources coming to Djenné are primarily judged on their potential economic benefit and UNESCO's more opaque proposition is therefore harder for *Djennenkés* to understand. When outside resources do arrive in Djenné they have to operate within a very complex political-economic reality, as experienced during the sanitation project.

The sanitation project

The sanitation project, begun in 2002, responded to one of the most pressing needs in Djenné today. The pilot phase was as add-on to the Dutch housing restoration project (discussed in the next chapter). After the pilot phase, the roll out of the project across Djenné was financially supported by the German Government. One of the main threats to both people and architecture in Djenné is the accumulation of waste water in the small alleys between the houses. This waste water, which remains stagnant in the heat for days, soon poses a public health threat as children play in it, people are forced to walk through it and mosquitoes and other insects use it as their breeding grounds (Figure 2). Historically, Djenné was free of waste water as people had to

collect water from the river. However, ever since the Canadian Government built a water tower in the 1980s providing many *Djennenkés* with running water in or near their homes, the accumulation of waste water in the streets has been a major challenge for the town. The water tower project had not made any provisions for the removal of waste water.



Figure 2. Open drain in Djenné

A typical street in Djenné before the sanitation project.

Like all the other projects involving external funding, the sanitation project ran into a number of difficulties that provide insights into the local political economic landscape of Djenné. The pilot phase of the project was broadly successful, however a few seeds of dissent were planted from the outset, leading to difficulties with rolling out the project across the whole town. The masons taking part in the sanitation project were asked to train for five days in order to learn how to build the drainage tanks. This was without remuneration as their training would ensure them future paid work on the project. The lack of payment for training led to a number of masons not taking part in

the project. This led to bitter resentment later, when masons who had not been trained saw those who had build the sanitation tanks in houses that were traditionally their responsibility (the relationship between masons and houses in Djenné is further explored in chapter 4). Additionally, the masons chosen to run the project did not fit with local conceptions of hierarchy within the masons' association (*the barey-ton*). Soon, rumours began to circulate that the sanitation project was fundamentally flawed, that the waste water, now channelled into individual tanks at the side of houses, would accumulate and undermine the foundation of the buildings.

A sensitisation project was launched to support the implementation of the sanitation project. An artist from Timbuktu was employed to illustrate the problems linked to the waste water in Djenné and the proposed solutions brought by the project. Three men and one woman then had the job of going to speak to house owners with their illustrations. The sanitation project undertook to fund half of the cost of the tanks (28,000 CFA per tank/ £28) and the house owners were required to pay back the cost of the other half (27,000 CFA/ £27) over twenty seven months, providing ongoing funding for the project. They were also asked to pay an ongoing 200 CFA (£0.20) per month for maintenance costs, a charge that was deeply unpopular because it was permanent. The resistance of some householders to the project was in part due to rumours started by the disenfranchised masons but also due to the financial burden the systems represented and the fact that some technical difficulties led to blockages and problems (for example, metal filters had to be replaced by cement filters as they degraded too rapidly). There was also an administrative problem with billing that led to some house owners not being billed for months and then suddenly being presented with a demand for 4000 CFA (£4) or 5000 CFA (£5). People consequently refused or

were unable to pay, putting in jeopardy the rolling out of the project across the whole of Djenné.

Understanding the resistance of many *Djennenkés* to the sanitation project is important when considering wider attitudes towards the preservation of cultural heritage in Djenné. Sanitation had been identified as the most important priority for the town by residents, local authorities and the national tourist office (OMATHO). *Djennenkés* regularly complained about the stench of waste water, the health threat it posed to their families and the fact that they often trail their clothes in the festering drains. Before the project, drains from rooftop bathrooms opened straight onto the narrow streets below. The sanitation project therefore marks a considerable improvement in living conditions for the majority of *Djennenkés*.

However, like any other project coming from the outside, it represented financial resources and therefore became the focus of a struggle for access and influence. The project's limited success was due to its encroachment on a complex political economic scene. A brief summary of the factors that frustrated the project's progress would include the encroaching on the masons *barey-ton* hierarchy, not including the traditional authorities such as the *Chef du Village* in early negotiations about setting the cost for the ongoing running of the project, underestimating the cost of communicating the project to the population, misunderstanding the conceptual importance of evacuating waste water out of the compound (not in a tank attached to it), running into difficulties with the lack of technical expertise of a decentralized local administration, and coinciding the project with bitter local elections and the

subsequent replacement of the Water Users' Board,²⁸ the body chosen to oversee the ongoing running of the project. The consequence of these difficulties is that the project incurred a direct loss of fifty million CFA (£50,000)²⁹. However, despite these difficulties three quarters of the town was finally covered by the project. A report written in 2007 evaluating its success concluded that despite residual worries, 85% of the people surveyed declared themselves to be in favour of the system³⁰. However, the ongoing success of the sanitation initiative is undermined by the fact that the majority of home owners do not pay their sanitation bill. 80% of those surveyed declared that they simply couldn't afford it. Additionally, many home owners are simply passing on the cost to their tenants, the poorest people in Djenné, who see their monthly bills rising.

Traditional Celebrations in Djenné

When discussing cultural heritage in Djenné, many people interviewed spoke about the celebrations (intangible heritage) that punctuate their year. These include religious festivals such as *Ramadan* and *Tabasci*, political festivals and events such as Independence Day and the Day of the Woman, traditional festivals such as the Rabbit

²⁸ Bigger cities in Mali have their water and energy run by EDM (state monopoly). Cities with population of between 5000 - 15000 inhabitants have non-profit making Water Users Boards. Two local representatives are elected for every public fountain and one for every 20 homes with water. These elected delegates go to the *Assemblée Générale* to approve the by-laws relating to water distribution. In Djenné, these delegates number almost 200 people and work alongside permanent employees who manage the accounts and the technical aspects of water supply. Djenné is at the limit of what can be managed under a Water Users Board system as Water Users Associations are meant to operate in places where it is not economically viable for National Agency (EDM) to operate. The Board is supposed to be audited twice a year by an organization linked to the National Hydraulic Agency which also gives them technical advice and ensures there is no misuse of funds. The Board in place until 2005 was a continuation of the ad hoc administration in place since 1988 before the system formalized in the mid 1990s. This ad hoc Board comprised of many ADEMA supporters and had left themselves open by not renewing their mandate when it was time to do so. Following a change in administration after local elections (a coalition of parties excluding ADEMA came into power) a struggle began to replace the old Water Users Board. An interim Board was appointed and then new elections were held in effect completely replacing the old Board (that had a large amount of expertise) with a new Board made up of people more politically aligned to the new administration in September 2005.

²⁹ Forsythe, Lacour & Roignant (2007) *Mesures d'urgence pour l'évacuation des eaux usées de la ville de Djenné, Mali : Rapport de Mission*. ENGREF/Groupe d'Assistance Française de Développement.

³⁰ Personal communication with one of the project leaders - December 2006.

Festival (*Tabay Ho*) and cultural festivals, such as the first Djenné Festival held in 2005 (described in Chapter 7).

A consequence of decentralisation on Djenné's cultural life is that the festivities on Independence Day have been greatly scaled down. Previously, people from all the surrounding villages would come to Djenné to take part in the ceremonies and games. The concept of the '*Djennéry*', a term that incorporates Djenné and its surrounding villages, dates back to the time of Cheikou Amadou (1775-1844) who established Djenné as the capital of a small territory in the state of Macina (Maas & Mommersteeg, 1992: 30). Now, other communes have their own celebrations and many people in Djenné are left feeling slightly disappointed with the new arrangement.

Independence Day, on the 22nd September, is marked by an official ceremony held in the main square, speeches and the symbolic raising of the flag. There follows traditional dances and a display put on by the hunters whose loud gunshots pierce the air. A series of races is organised, sack, donkey, bike, all leading up to the *pirogue* (boat) race, that is the main event. Children also take part in a competition to catch ducks on the river by jumping off boats and vigorously swimming after them. A child who catches a duck is met with a huge cheer from the crowd who line the banks all the way up the river. Independence Day also allowed the winning football team in the local cup to parade through the town centre. Women in Djenné use the occasion of Independence Day to wear traditional clothes and large jewellery and attend the celebrations in the main square. Other families, who are too poor for new clothes, watch national Independence Day celebrations on television, gathered round people's houses.

Despite decentralisation, Independence Day is still a major celebration in Djenné and is an opportunity for people to dress up and celebrate different aspects of Djenné's cultural life. The disappointment comes from the fact that the day is no longer shared with friends and family from outlying communes. From the outset, the Djenné Festival committee ignored this new decentralised identity and cast itself as the *Festival du Djennéry*. In fact, as will be described in Chapter 7, the majority of the evenings' entertainment during the festival was performed not by people from Djenné but by people coming from outlying villages.



Figure 3. Harpoon

A bozo man holding a harpoon passed on to him by his father, used during *Tabay-Ho*.

At the end of September, the Festival of *Tabay Ho* (Rabbit Hunting Festival) takes place. Traditionally, the festival used to involve the hunting of bigger game (now disappeared from the region) and older men used to participate. Today, it is an event aimed at teenage boys and young men. Older men approve of the young men taking part as participation in festivals is considered important for the protection of the

town. It also reminds older men of their youth and allows them to retell their hunting stories. One man showed me the harpoon he used to use during the festival (Figure 3), passed down to him by his father and that he has now passed on to his son. Unfortunately, his son had lost the arrow head (said to have been found by his grandfather near the archaeological site of at Djenné-Djeno) attached to the end of the harpoon during the last *Tabay Ho*. The re-use of objects found at Djenné-Djeno, for example as storage jars or toys for children has been documented by Panella (2002: 140).

The signal for the festival to begin comes after the incantations of the eldest representative of the Djennépo family. The hunting competition is held between the different *quartiers* in Djenné and young men set out in small groups in their *pirogues* with brightly painted paddles. They take with them some provisions (e.g. tinned sardines, bread) as they will be out hunting from early morning to lunchtime. Afterwards, the festivities continue with a pirogue race, songs and the traditional dance of the *Rimaïbé* (*Esclaves de Peul*). Only older children who are able to swim can take part in the festival. Tragically, in 2005, a younger boy, the son of a photographer in the Kanafa district of Djenné, drowned after sneaking out with some friends and borrowing a *pirogue*. The boy fell in the water after a scuffle with his friend and the alarm was raised. It took two hours dredging the river with nets to locate his body in a deep hole that had been dug during the dry season to prepare the mud for *crépissage*. Many people died during my time in Djenné but the shocking accidental nature of this death on a day of celebration seemed to cause more trauma than other deaths. On many Mosques, buildings and vehicles around Mali the words '*L'homme propose, Dieu dispose*' can be seen (this term is difficult to translate but it encompasses the fact that life is tentative and subject to God's revoke at any moment). Most of the women I

met in Djenné had had to silently deal with the grief of a child dying, the death of a child on *Tabay Ho* however, provoked a very public outpouring of grief and a suspension of festivities in the boy's home *quartier*.



Figure 4. Djenné's Monday Market

Every Monday, people from surrounding villages come to Djenné to trade.

The Monday market

As well as through traditional celebrations and festivals, intangible heritage is present in Djenné in the form of its Monday market (Figure 4). The Monday market is not only the marker of time in the town, it also the day when people from the wider village communities, the *Djennéry*, flood into Djenné. It is therefore a day of celebration and of trade and the day on which the tourists descend upon Djenné, arriving like the market traders on Sunday evening and leaving on Monday evening or Tuesday morning. For the rest of the week, Djenné is a quiet town and few tourists can be seen in the streets. Mondays not only bring buyers to the markets but also patients to the hospital and maternity clinic. It is the most important day of the week

for everyone in the town, including the children who attend school from Tuesday to Saturday so that they are free to help buy and sell produce in the market.

The market stall holders start to set up on Sunday evenings amidst a carnival atmosphere as the square in front of the Mosque is invaded by trucks, carts and people. Despite a continuous stream of people arriving until early on Monday morning, it is not until about 10 am that the market is in full swing:

Another market day, there are so many people everywhere. The market is a mass of colourful chaos. You walk past mounds of fruit and then seconds later you are overwhelmed by the stench of fish. There are people wielding baskets, fish nets, buckets and radios. On the way to the see Ousmane, I had to walk through what I now recognise as the dried fish section. I hadn't noticed before that it is divided into sections – clothes as you first arrive on the wall in front of the Mosque, then fruit and vegetables a bit further forward. The pharmacy type stuff is at the front near the bead sellers and the material sellers are in the middle³¹.

Each week, the market traders all resume their positions from the previous week and in this way the market itself leaves a presence in its absence. However, there have been subtle changes in the market's physical distribution over the years. Compared to a sketch of the market drawn in 1982 and reproduced in 1992 (Maas & Mommersteeg, 1992: 48), certain products seemed to have gained in presence, such as second-hand clothing.

³¹ Research diary entry, 27th December 2004.

Produce that cannot be found during the rest of the week such as eggs, potatoes, honey and certain fruits can all be purchased on a Monday. It is also the day on which people can buy dried fish and rice (the basis of the Djenné diet) in bulk. A large selection of second-hand clothes are on offer, as well as plastic buckets, pots, pans, radios, torches, shoes and most of the things needed for every day life in Djenné. Despite the large tourist presence, the produce in the Monday market is not aimed at them and only the women selling their bead jewellery particularly solicit the tourists. There are also some itinerant jewellery traders (often Tuareg) who come to encounter tourists. Due to the market's density and the very strong smells and heat, most tourists quickly visit the market with their guide and then look on from the more comfortable vantage point of a bench, rooftop or café. The tourist presence however ensures that the artisan shops are busy as well as the restaurants and hotels that are often full to capacity during high season. Mondays are therefore the economic engine of Djenné.

For many of the tourists visiting Djenné, the market serves as dramatic foreground activity in their photographs of the Mosque. The travel guides to Mali are united in their advice to visit Djenné on Monday creating a challenge for local guides who are presented with a glut of tourists on a Monday with reduced activity for the rest of the week. Djenné's intangible heritage in the form of the market is a major draw for tourists and tour companies alike who will schedule their itineraries around it. Developing tourism beyond Mondays was one of the *Office Malienne du Tourisme et de l'Hôtellerie* (OMATHO) key challenges (discussed in Chapter 6). Therefore Djenné, in terms of tourism, is heavily defined by its intangible heritage (its Monday market) as well as its tangible heritage.

Boys' Houses

In their early teens, many boys in Djenné gather together in age groups, some of whom live together in rented rooms (in some ways echoing the traditional '*sahos*' found in neighbouring villages such as Kouakourou). *Sahos* are traditional houses for young Bozo men, found particularly in the villages surrounding Djenné. Traditional *sahos* no longer exist in Djenné yet their institutional function, that of allowing young boys in their teenage years to have a place in which to live semi-independently from their families with a degree of sexual freedom (Maas & Mommersteeg, 1992:67), still finds expression in the boys' houses found in Djenné today (Van Gijn, 1994: 99) .

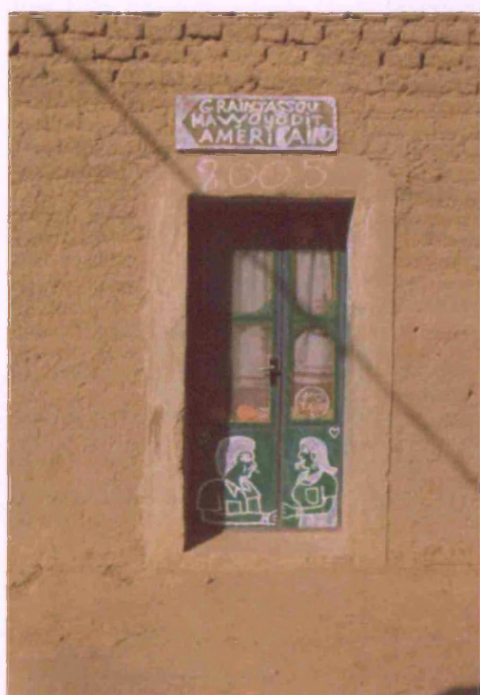


Figure 5. A Boys House in Djenné

Many of these modern day boys' houses (Walde in Peul) in Djenné now have a very contemporary feel (Figure 5), modelled on the idea of an American 'gang' and named accordingly. In 2008, the names included '*Fangafin*' (black power), *Playboy*, *Mafia*,

Blackstar and *Cool Boy*. Within the groups, individual nicknames include *Che Guevara*, *Fifty*, *Kadafi*, *Fidel Castro* and *Général Guéï* (a military ruler from the Ivory Coast). The same use of nicknames to denote group belonging is found amongst the guides (described in Chapter 6). Young girls in Djenné will 'belong' to a boys' house through association with one of its members.

A large part of the aggressive branding of the boys' house is due to posturing as many will be in conflict with each other and tensions will regularly erupt into physical clashes. The 'uniform' some of these young boys adopt is therefore often chosen to denote fearlessness and in Djenné this seems to translate into a hybrid mixture of hip-hop gang symbols (bandanas, jeans, depictions of guns, sunglasses, jewellery) and often includes images of iconic figures or contemporary figures of notoriety such as Che Guevara, Fidel Castro³² or Osama Bin Laden, without necessarily understanding their wider political significance.

Poverty

Being a white person in Djenné offers you privileged and often uncomfortable access to people's private lives. One of the most extreme examples of suffering I came across in Djenné was through my involvement with a small child, Miriam. I first came into contact with her when I was interviewing one of her neighbours. The neighbour in question lived in a tiny cramped compound and was showing me part of the top floor of his house that had fallen to ruins, meaning that his children no longer had a place to sleep. In times of rain, he would send his children to sleep at his brother's house for

³² The Malian President made a visit to Cuba in 2005 and met Fidel Castro whom he is said to admire greatly. The governments signed a new agreement for Cuban doctors to work in Mali. There are also cultural exchanges between Cuba and Mali such as the music school in Bamako 'L'Ecole de Balafaseeki' with provisions for teachers to be trained in Cuba.

shelter. At others times, the children would simply sleep outside. His wife was ill and was coughing up phlegm throughout our interview, which she then wiped on the wall behind her while her children clambered about her person. I saw Miriam in her courtyard, a painfully malnourished baby, cradled in her sister's arms.

Miriam's first hospital visit resulted in a diagnosis of malaria and typhoid together with severe malnutrition, weighing only 5.5 kilograms, less than half the weight she should have been at her age. I did not intend to get more involved with Miriam than with any other child in Djenné but I found out that she was particularly vulnerable as her family had fairly recently arrived in Djenné from a neighbouring village. It was clear that the little family unit had completely run out of resources. Her brothers, in threadbare clothes, could often be seen begging at the market. Through a woman living in my compound, I heard about a UNICEF run programme in Djenné intended to help malnourished children. After much negotiation, I managed to get Miriam enrolled on the feeding programme which meant that each week she was given three little bags of fortified flour. Along with UNESCO, UNICEF and some NGOs have a presence in Djenné. Most NGOs come to Djenné on an *ad hoc* basis, with specific budgets and time constraints. Djenné is not self-sufficient in terms of food, healthcare or education and relies on outside help to survive. There does not seem to be any shame associated with accepting outside help, and in fact there seem to be very powerful patron/client expectations, with ongoing help expected from organisations that have previously had a presence in Djenné.

Over the following weeks, despite Miriam putting on weight on her new regime, it was clear that the rest of the family was struggling badly. Miriam's father left for

Burkina Faso to become a migrant labourer. Their government distributed food³³ was fast running out and like many other poor families in Djenné at the time, they were reduced to eating one meal a day. Through a friend in the Peace Corps, I found out that one of the expatriates who have homes in Djenné was funding his own rice distribution project intended to help the poorest families at this time of crisis. Miriam's family qualified for this help so I delivered a 10 kilogram rice bag to them on Independence Day in September 2005. This allowed them to survive until the return of Miriam's father four months later.

A small number of expatriates have built homes in Djenné³⁴. They include a Frenchman named Joseph Brunet-Jailly who set up the organisation *Djenné Patrimoine*. An American, Jean-Louis Bourgeois, the author of a book about vernacular architecture (1989) was behind the rice distribution project. The presence of a handful of rich expatriates in Djenné inevitably distorts some of the local power structures as they have the power to change people's lives through employment or donations.

In an interview after his return from Burkina Faso, Miriam's father explained to me that he brought his family to Djenné in the year 2000 so that his children could go to school. He showed me an old and battered copy of a magazine about the problem of farming in Mali. He had unsuccessfully tried to start an association for Peul herders, hoping that together they could raise the money to buy a few animals which they could then breed. Despite being born in Djenné himself, his family moved out to a

³³ The Malian Government distributed rice to families in Djenné in 2005 to help with the consequences of a poor harvest brought about by drought.

³⁴ The latest person to build a house in Djenné is the Dutch architect Pierre Maas. The house is currently under construction for use by visiting students and researchers to the town.

village when he was young. They used to have cattle but his father lost his cattle during the 1985-86 droughts.

Miriam's father has a multiple approach strategy when trying to provide for his family. As well as migrant labour, in 2005 he had been a *marabout* for nine years and provides Koranic education for local children who come to him for instruction in the mornings. Due to the poverty of many of the families in Djenné, Koranic teachers receive very little money from their pupils (they usually receive a symbolic 50 CFA (£0.05) every Wednesday but even this is beyond the means of some). Some *marabouts* in Djenné gather their pupils from outlying villages and these children (*garibous*) are entrusted to them completely, often not seeing their families for years on end. In order to earn a living, many of them are sent by their *marabout* to beg, collect firewood or work in the market or as labourers. These *garibous* are very vulnerable as they do not have access to healthcare and are often malnourished and live in very poor conditions. The Malian Government and UNICEF are trying to take steps to improve the lives of these children³⁵ however their condition has come about as a consequence of extreme poverty. Previously, I was told, *marabouts* would have owned land and the *garibous* would work on the land in exchange for food, a home and a Koranic education.

Miriam's father rents two rooms for his family in a shared compound for 1000 CFA (£1) a month and likes living in Djenné. Ideally though, he would want to own his own home. When asked about Djenné he said that he could not describe Djenné as beautiful as it is such a poor town. He explained to me that poverty was the reason I

³⁵ Committee on the Rights of the Child, 44th Session: *Conclusions on Reports of Kenya, Mali, Honduras, Marshall Islands, Suriname, Malaysia and Chile* (2 February 2007). See www.unog.ch (United Nations Office in Geneva).

found his daughter so ill, and that he would have liked to have paid to treat her himself. He hoped his wife could start making a bit of money by setting up a small shop in the entrance of the courtyard from which she could sell tea, sugar and cigarettes. Despite having to leave his family every year to go and work in Burkina Faso, he considered the sacrifice worthwhile if it meant his children received a good education (by which he meant sending them to the local French speaking school). On a visit to Djenné in 2008, I found Miriam well and happy. However, her new baby sister was ill with typhoid fever. Her elder sister Awa had been married the previous year at just 15 to a man of over 50 and was already pregnant. Awa's husband, a wealthy man by Djenné standards, had taken her as his second wife and to a certain extent could provide a new layer of financial security for the rest of the family, especially as Miriam's father was once again away in Burkina Faso. Life for Awa, however, had changed dramatically as she had had to abandon all of her academic ambitions, despite having previously done very well at school.

My involvement with Miriam was just one of many relationships that ran through my time in Djenné. She was one of the poorest children I came across but I saw her experience reproduced in many ways: through the adults in Djenné who bear the scars of childhood malnutrition, the young *garibous* who are reliant on *marabouts* in turn too poor to care for them, and in constant conversation with people preoccupied with the rains and harvests. As a starting point for talking about cultural heritage in Djenné, Miriam's experience is illuminating. In Djenné, UNESCO is carrying out its World Heritage Project in a context of extreme poverty. It is not an exaggeration to suggest that the success or failure of UNESCO's promotion of Djenné and the subsequent impact this has on tourism and other income is sometimes a matter of life or death for people. Money that comes to the town through heritage projects and

tourism helps to make life in Djenné viable, especially in times of drought. However, the World Heritage Project is not a development project and it is not within UNESCO's remit to save lives through heritage. Instead, it is the material heritage in Djenné that is considered in danger, the mud brick architecture and the surrounding archaeological sites.

This material heritage is conceptualised as the heritage of humanity and therefore subject to international protection. The conflicts over the access and control of cultural heritage that are described throughout this thesis can be understood as having this basic tension at their core: people's real lives coming up against an abstracted notion of cultural heritage. To what extent this abstracted notion has been imposed by the outside is debatable but it is clear that some people in Djenné, whom I term the 'heritage elite', have successfully acquired a 'language of heritage' (a version of the Authorised Heritage Discourse) that resonates with Western donors and attracts financial backing to their causes. This 'heritage elite' maps onto, with a few exceptions, the previously existent power structures present in the town. The majority of the population, however, simply see the restrictions brought to the town by the World Heritage status as frustrating their attempts to live a better life as they feel increasingly powerless to maintain their mud brick houses in the face of worsening climatic and economic conditions .

Poverty and heritage

According to the United Nations Development Programme in 2006, Mali ranks 175 out of 177 countries in its Human Development Report and is therefore one of the

poorest countries in the world, only Sierra Leone and Niger are poorer³⁶. The Index is arrived at after combining measures of life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real income. Describing the consequences of poverty on people's attitudes towards their cultural heritage is important in order to identify the reason for the schism between UNESCO's view of Djenné and the views of people living within the town.

Projects such as UNESCO's World Heritage List and African Cultural Heritage initiatives (e.g. Africa 2009) have been a way to celebrate African cultural heritage and avoid the constant refrain of poverty and Africa. However, as Ferguson (2006: 192) has recently argued, there are dangers with this approach:

My thesis has been that anthropologists lately have tended to focus on the first axis of the development diagram, the first product of modernity's decomposition - a happy story about plurality and non-ranked cultural difference- to the neglect of the second, which yields relatively fixed global statuses and a de-temporalized world socioeconomic hierarchy. In this way, the application of a language of alternative modernities to the most impoverished regions of the globe risks becoming a way of avoiding talking about the non-serialized, de-temporalized political economic statuses of our time, and thus, evading the question of a rapidly worsening global inequality and its consequences.

Ferguson argues that 'modernity' (for all the problems with the term) is something that many people in Africa feel that they lack. Advocating a new rational approach to talking about the continent's problems, Ferguson is trying to re-balance the discourse

³⁶ The UN Human Development Report can be found at <http://hdr.undp.org>

of Africa's place in the world within a more realistic (and humane) global reality. His thesis can usefully be applied to discussions about cultural heritage because the radical inequalities, shocking poverty and life conditions he describes are the reality that cultural heritage projects encounter when they encounter Africa. In Djenné, advocating a de-temporalized architectural status for the town is often locally read as the advocating of a de-temporalized economic status. Additionally, it is the town's very architecture (e.g. the cramped conditions, drop toilets, leaks in the rainy season) that is contributing to the health epidemics of malaria, typhoid and cholera in Djenné.

Many people in Djenné can fit their worldly belongings into a bag. Owning material goods is a source of security due to the lack of an adequate savings mechanism (the first bank came to Djenné in 2007) and the temperamental nature of rain and harvests. An embroiderer, Ousmane, with whom I worked explained to me how a person's wealth used to be invested in the clothes they wore (an embroidered boubou can cost up to 300,000 CFA, £300). Today, expensive embroidered clothes are only ordered by a few of the richest people in the town, and most of Ousmane's orders come from rich Malians living outside Djenné and from tourists. Similarly, the traditional heavy jewellery that used to be passed down through families is increasingly disappearing. A jeweller in Djenné told me the story of a woman who owned a 300 gram 23.5 carat gold bracelet. She used to wear it for big events and festivals. She ended up selling nearly all of it over a period of 20 years: "I was the one who started to cut it" He told me.

The woman managed to successfully bring up her family through sacrificing part of her family's material heritage. She came to him for the first time when she needed

50,000 CFA (£50) so they cut 8 grams off. Over the years, little by little, she sold off nearly the whole bracelet, a bit at a time. When she first came to him, she had just lost her husband and had small children to care for. She managed to pay for their upbringing on her own and I was told that one of her children now works in Bamako and another in Mopti, signalling their success. She now only has two small earrings left from the original bracelet. The story was related to me without value judgement. The original function of the bracelet, to be a portable form of wealth, had served its purpose and allowed her family to survive. The loss of the object itself was not mentioned by the jeweller. Similarly another jeweller in Djenné told me how he regularly bought old jewellery from women in the countryside. He saw himself as providing a valuable service to these women by freeing up the capital the jewellery represented. Once he had taken a photograph of the jewellery he would either sell it to Western collectors or melt it down and make more modern adaptations using some of the original designs. He spoke about his work in terms of improving the old designs to fit with women's new aspirations for lighter jewellery in a more modern style.

At first glance, therefore, it appears that people in Djenné have a pragmatic attitude towards their cultural heritage and will adapt and dispose of it to suit their needs and ambitions. The reality, however, is more complex. The task of identifying what is and what is not considered important cultural heritage in Djenné is not straightforward. For example, local attitudes towards the surrounding archaeological sites, discussed in Chapter 4, show how Islamic attitudes towards pre-Islamic material culture are determining the success of Western anti-looting sensitisation projects. In many cases, cultural heritage is something that is identified as a potential resource and therefore appropriated and offered up for tourist consumption. The importance this heritage

has for the individual appropriating it beyond its financial significance needs further scrutiny.

Participation in ‘official’ forms of heritage in Djenné

I met Aminata through working with her in one of the public women’s gardens on the outskirts of Djenné. She told me that the garden was started a long time ago. At the beginning, it was simply surrounded by straw but the sheep ate it and destroyed the garden. Then, they planted trees to protect the garden, but the sheep still got in. A mud brick wall was then built but fell down because of the rain so in the end they found foreign financial help to build the fence that successfully protects the garden today. The garden is situated around a well and provides food and additional income for dozens of families. Similar gardens can be found all around the outskirts of Djenné and they stand out for large parts of the year as the only little patches of irrigation in an otherwise dry landscape (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Women's garden in Djenné.

One of many women's gardens found outside Djenné (the town can be seen in the background).

Learning a bit about Aminata allows us to consider the extent to which she is implicated in UNESCO's World Heritage Project. She is in her forties, although she appears older due to her thinness. Aminata agreed that in return for allowing me to use some of her land, I would pay for my own seeds and share my harvest with her. I also provided her with a new watering can (made from a recycled oil cans and bought at the Djenné market) and a rubber bucket and rope to get water from the well.

Aminata talks about her life in terms of the activities she does to provide for her family. She taught me how to plant carrots, tomatoes and lettuce, each requiring different soil balances and care. She has specialist horticultural knowledge which she is passing on to her children and relatives. Despite our limited communication during our work in the garden, for Aminata only spoke *Bozo* and *Djennenké*, I managed to find out more about her through regular interviews with my research assistant. She is

fairly representative of many women in Djenné. She divides her time between working in the garden, fishing, housekeeping and jewellery making. Her days start early and end late and involve a lot of physical labour. She usually wakes at 6 am and after her prayers starts work in the garden. The only duty she does not do is cooking, which is done by her husband's first wife. Many women in Djenné supplement the household income by selling goods or produce at the daily women's market. Excess produce can also be bartered in times of need.

Aminata lives in a compound with her children; her sister's orphaned children and some female adult relatives. Having lost her first husband, she re-married an older man who already had a wife and who lives in a compound a few minutes walk away. He visits her regularly but is himself very poor, too old to work and therefore not able to contribute much financially to her household. It was explained to me that it was important for women in Djenné to be married, so, unless very elderly, a woman will usually be found another husband through the intermediary of her family.

2005 was a very bad year in Djenné due to the failure of the rains. Aminata explained to me in an interview in October that she was unable to do the things that she would usually do such as go and visit her relatives in nearby towns due to a total lack of money. Bad rains for the second year running meant that people had no reserves to fall back on and many had to content themselves with one meal a day and go to bed hungry. Despite the government food distribution programme, numerous families in Djenné at the end of 2005 were not able to eat properly and therefore rates of illnesses soared. This was true for Aminata and her family who had regular bouts of malaria and typhoid, and weakened by their poor diets, were ill for a long time.

In between the end of the rainy season and December, the women's gardens are flooded so there is a four month wait until planting can begin again. Aminata told me that she did not have the money to buy beads and make bracelets which would have contributed to her income. Usually, she would use the money she made from selling fish to buy the beads. She would sell a kilo of dried fish for 800 CFA (£0.80) but the fishing was poor due to a lack of water in the river. A bag of beads costs 2000 CFA (£2) so is a considerable outlay as at least three colours, therefore three bags, are needed to make the bracelets. Usually, she could make five bracelets in a day and sell them for 75 CFA (£0.075) each. When unable to buy the beads herself, she makes bracelets for another woman who pays her 500 CFA (£0.50) per week for her labour. As means to make additional income through tourism therefore, jewellery making is not very lucrative and even less so when it is an indirect relationship between the producer and the tourist. Bracelets and necklaces are usually sold for a few hundred CFA to the tourists, the price depending on the nature of the design and how much the tourist is willing to pay. When she was a child, Aminata used to make a type of basket called '*foutou*' in Songhay. These baskets no longer exist as they have been replaced by bags. She has long since lost the knowledge she would need to make these traditional baskets.

Like many people in Djenné of her age, Aminata feels that life used to be better. She thinks that children today are arrogant and no longer respect their parents. Despite this view, I saw her children watering the garden every day, selling straw in the market, helping with household chores and for a few of them, balancing all this with the demands of school. She remembers a time when there was plenty of water and consequently good harvests and fishing in Djenné. Aminata worries about the future of her children although she has a strong religious belief that they will be taken care

of. She would be happy for them to leave Djenné if it meant that they could make money. She fears however that her son will become a mason like his uncle. She would prefer him to use his education to get a better job as despite UNESCO's promotion of the masons in Djenné through the protection of the town's architecture, the job of a mason remains that of a skilled manual labourer and consequently does not equal in many people's minds less physically difficult occupations.

Aminata's situation is typical of many women in Djenné who have the responsibility of the majority of the domestic labour while also needing to supplement their small family income with bartering and low level trade. In most households in Djenné, one if not more of the women are involved in producing jewellery that is sold locally and on Mondays to the tourists at the market. Despite variations in style and colour, women are producing very similar products throughout Djenné and there does not seem to be an appetite for diversifying their work. Some of the artisans in Djenné, as discussed in Chapter 5, are becoming increasingly astute at producing products for tourist consumption. Efforts to create a space for a women's co-operative of artisans, also discussed later, are bringing women's domestic production of *artisanat* to the attention of tourists. However, the barriers that lie between the women and the tourists' money include the guides working in Djenné who carefully regulate their clients spending to ensure a commission.

Although Aminata lives in one of the houses protected by Djenné's World Heritage status, she does not know who or what UNESCO is. The concept of World Heritage is alien to her as she has never travelled further than the capital city, Bamako. The tourists that come to Djenné, in part because of its UNESCO status, do provide her with some income from the sale of her bracelets and help her with the precarious

work of providing for her family. Due to a Canadian project to build a water tower in the town, discussed earlier in relation to the sanitation project, many of the residents in Djenné now have access to clean running water in their homes. Aminata and her family have access to a tap outside the entrance to their home therefore saving them the daily journeys to the river. However, Aminata lacks knowledge of the correct discourse (AHD) to gain direct access to the money coming to Djenné in the form of cultural heritage projects.

Housing from the inside

Aminata has no surplus of goods of any kind in her home. Her house is fairly typical of the poorer houses I saw in Djenné (the different types of houses found in Djenné will be explored in Chapter 4). Entering a house is usually done through a vestibule. This is where old men making tea, and women making jewellery and looking after young children, sit and talk during the day and are able to interact with passers by. Once through the vestibule, one enters into the courtyard, where most of the household activities take place (see also Van Gijn, 1994). The courtyard is usually bare apart from a few low wooden stools and cooking utensils, pots and pans disposed of in an area marked off as a kitchen, sometimes by low mud brick walls (Figure 7). Increasingly, people have plastic chairs or metal chair frames woven with plastic rope to offer to their visitors. More traditionally, mats are arranged on the ground and shelter from the sun is provided by a porch, made from material or plastic sheeting hung between two poles and one of the walls. The courtyards of the houses in Djenné are alive with the activity of women, children and animals. When the men are present, they sit a little aside from the domestic activity, usually with a small coal fire at their sides to make tea. At meal times, the whole family gathers around communal

bowls to eat, the men usually eating apart from the women and children. The different rooms in the house lead off from the courtyard.



Figure 7. Interior courtyard of a house

Photo: André Ullal

The courtyard of Aminata's house, in the Kanafa district of Djenné.

Except in the richest households, bedrooms are bare rooms with mattresses and blankets on the floor and clothing is hung across from one wall to another to keep it off the ground. Prayers mats are often kept in the bedrooms and brought out for use. Most houses have a store room where grain and equipment is kept. The poorer houses in Djenné are scaled down versions of the richer houses. They are usually arranged on one floor, often lack salons, adequate room in the courtyard to make a clear kitchen space and separate rooms for the parents and children. The poorest families (such as Miriam's family) rent a few rooms around a communal courtyard and live in cramped conditions. The rooms in Djenné houses are small and let in little light. Most houses, however, have a flat roof living space, some with views across the town. Many of the older and richer houses are two storeys high with the roof space providing a third storey where people sleep and spend time during the hot season. The washing is

usually hung out to dry on the roof and the bathroom (including a drop toilet), a mud brick ceiling-less bare room with a gap draining onto the street below, is also found on the roof.



Figure 8. Ruined house behind the Mosque in Djenné

One of many fallen down houses in Djenné. In the background, a house covered in tiles can be seen.

Living conditions for the majority of people in Djenné can be described as basic. Despite the often romanticised appearances of the façades of the houses (see for example Maas & Mommersteeg 1992, Bourgeois 1989, Morton 2000), inside the small windows and thick walls lead to a lack of ventilation and space. Djenné is a compressed urban space as it is surrounded by water for much of the year, so houses are built tightly together and the narrow alleyways that separate them often fester with sewage. The advantage of banco houses is that they remain cool in summer and retain the heat in winter. The disadvantage is that mud is washed off during the rainy

season leading to unsanitary conditions and the houses need to have an annual re-laying of mud to remain viable structures.

For many people in Djenné their homes are both 'heritage' and functional. Houses are passed down from one generation to the next through a prescribed inheritance procedure following Shari'a Law³⁷. The houses are divided between the children, each daughter being eligible to half of what a son will receive³⁸. In practice, houses tend to be taken on by the eldest son upon the death of the father and other members of the family will live within the compound, depending on its size and their personal situation. The division of goods in Djenné for inheritance purposes means that many houses are simply left to fall into ruin when siblings cannot agree on whose responsibility it is to pay for its financial upkeep (Figure 8). Members of the family who are working outside the town or even the country may not want to contribute financially to the upkeep of a house they have no intention of living in. However, they retain the part-ownership right that discourages other members of the family to bear the burden.

Ideally, men in Djenné will have the money to build houses for their other sons, assuming the eldest will inherit their home. The lack of space in Djenné however means that it is hard to find viable land on which to build new homes. This has led to the practice of building new houses on the outskirts of the town on landfill sites that risk flooding.

³⁷ In 2002, Alpha Oumar Konaré was defeated by Islamists when trying to reform the 'Family Code' in Mali to ensure that men and women had equal inheritance rights (Soares, 2005:92)

³⁸ Malian heritage law prescribes that monumental homes must be kept in good order or risk being expropriated by the State (Personal Communication, Prof Rogier Bedaux, 13/05/08).

Adding extra storeys to existing houses is also impossible due to the limits of building with banco. Mamadou, a retired vet, is looking towards the undeveloped land on the outskirts of the town to build a house for his sons. He is intending to build them a house in cement as he considers that such a house would be a 'true inheritance' as it would not need the annual upkeep of a banco house. His house, in the heart of Djenné, has been in his family for generations and is intended for his eldest son. Despite the attractions of a house in cement, Mamadou would not consider moving away from his home as it was where he was born, and where he intends to die.

The extreme poverty in Djenné means that people are increasingly leaving the town to make a living. One informant in his 50s told me that out of his age group of 25, only 5 people remained in Djenné. This migration of young people, together with the threat to people's livelihoods due to the Talo Dam Project (discussed in chapter 4) and repeated bad harvests means that there may well not be a living Djenné for UNESCO to protect in fifty years time. As will be set out in Chapter 4, the increasing cost of housing in Djenné is leading people to take extreme measures to ensure their houses do not fall down. Whether through a transformation of its architecture or through abandonment, Djenné will inevitably change in the years to come. As traditional forms of subsistence, such as rice cultivation, herding and fishing seem increasingly threatened by unpredictable rains and poor harvests, the town will need to draw on the strongest aspects of its cultural heritage, as an Islamic centre and architectural and archaeological tourist destination, in order to provide a viable economic life for its residents.

Conclusion

The long term survival of the architecture of Djenné is intimately linked to people's ability to pay for the regular upkeep of their houses. An ethnographic approach to heritage shows how 'cultural heritage' (in a UNESCO sense) is dealt with within the context of broader social and economic pressures. For example, poor harvests due to a lack of rains lead to an increase in the incidence of illness within families. The cost of healthcare and an inability to work lead the family to decide not to pay for their house to be re-mudded that year.

A less direct example would be one of a family who consider it more important to spend money on dressing correctly for festive occasions than paying for the upkeep of their house. Again, in this instance a lack of resources is at the heart of the decision not to re-mud the house. The immediate need of acquiring new clothes for a festival takes precedence over the long term need of spending money on the house. Money is therefore spent on the production and reproduction of culture in different ways. Money is found to send children to school, to see traditional healers and on the production of *gris-gris* (amulets). However, large sums of money, such as those needed to pay for the re-mudding of houses, are rarely found from a combination of small economies. In part, this is due to the inability to hold on to money over time, described in Chapter 6, but also due to the multiple demands of everyday life.

An analysis of *Djennenkés'* attitudes towards their universally recognised cultural heritage should therefore begin with a bottom up approach. People in Djenné live within their political, economic and religious affiliations. Houses in Djenné are first and foremost individual homes that shelter and leak, welcome and exclude, and are part of people's economic responsibilities. It would be wrong to describe people's

inability to find the funds to pay for the upkeep of their houses as a short-termist outlook as it would not explain, for example, people sending their children to school.

It could be argued that paying for upkeep is a difficult emotional decision because in many ways it is paying for what you already own. The practice of using tiles, described in the next chapter, allows a *Djennenké* to not only buy peace of mind into the future but also to aesthetically transform the house. Despite the belief in some quarters that people in Djenné given the choice 'will express themselves in mud' (next chapter), it is clear that in reality people are choosing to turn to new materials to maintain their houses.

Unlike the *crépissage* of the Mosque in Djenné which is a time for celebration, the yearly (or biennial) re-mudding of individual houses in Djenné is becoming an increasing burden, costing around 100,000 CFA/£100 (a breakdown of costs is given in the next chapter). This, combined with the fact that people do not reject the aesthetic appearance of the tiles or particularly care about the 'patina' and rounded shapes so often eulogised led by Western observers (and described in the next chapter in relation to the Colonial Exhibition at Vincennes) could lead to more and more of Djenné's houses being covered in the reddish fired clay tiles. This trend could have a radical effect on tourism and on the future of Djenné as a World Heritage site. However, for the inhabitants of Djenné it could increasingly be seen as the most cost-effective solution to the problem of their current housing crisis.

Part of the reason for choosing to do an ethnography of heritage was the desire to approach the question of cultural transmission from the basis of 'local knowledge'. In Djenné, as everywhere else, there proved to be far too many variables when talking about people's identity (temporary, permanent, long or short term, passive, active,

political, economic etc...) to be able to reach any satisfactory general conclusions about how people position themselves *vis-à-vis* their cultural heritage. However, what became clear in Djenné is that what unites people is poverty and the fact that the long term preservation of Djenné's architectural and archaeological heritage is dependent on the way in which this heritage can be made to 'work for' local populations, both politically and economically.

Perhaps the important point to consider is that any legal or political instrument concerning cultural heritage in Djenné is based on a series of assumptions, some of which anthropologists have helped to create, as has been argued in the case of UNESCO. An anthropological approach to cultural heritage in Djenné therefore suffers from the anthropologist being implicated in his or her own project of demystification. In Djenné, UNESCO has identified the two most conspicuous aspects of the town's cultural heritage for special note: the archaeology and the architecture, however this is a long way from saying that these represent the material things people consider important to them in Djenné. In fact the very notion of 'outstanding universal value' is a quest for the unique, while the experience UNESCO has had with intangible heritage is that it is often the 'mundane', the everyday, that lends meaning to people's lives. In this, Djenné is no different from any other place in the world and material possessions such as clothing, jewellery, status symbols (mobile phones, televisions, motorbikes) all have enormous importance for people. *Djennenkés* also describe Djenné in terms of its intangible heritage: its Monday market, its festivals and the social relationships that hold people together and lend Djenné its sense of place and identity.

Perhaps UNESCO's quest for the unique ('outstanding universal value') means that through its World Heritage List it is undertaking a project concerned with difference, not similarity across all cultures. It is this very difference that is capitalised upon to attract tourists. However, this difference may not necessarily be experienced by *Djennenkés* as a positive thing. The next chapter will explore the creation of this difference and the romanticisation of Djenné as a place.

4 Contested heritage and the violence of the archive

Over the years, the West has apprehended Djenné in different ways. At first, it did so through writings and exhibitions, part of broader imaginings about Africa (Hall, 2005; Leiris, 1934; Phillips & Steiner, 1999). The interest in its vernacular architecture grew from the time of the arrival in the West of early photographs, postcards and colonial exhibitions (Gardi, 1994; Gardi *et al.*, 1995; Morton, 2000). These glimpses gave the impression of Djenné as a far away place, difficult to get to and to get around, with winding streets and compact architecture. Still today, Djenné is enchanting because it promises to be so different from people's places of origin (Hudgens & Trillo, 1999). In conversation, tourists were often disappointed that the Djenné they encountered was expecting them. The hotels and restaurants they found on their arrival were tangible evidence that many people had come before them.

This disparity between tourists expectations and the reality of Djenné warrants further exploration. It is in part caused by expectations created by an outside 'archival' knowledge about Djenné which has evolved through years of academic writing, travel literature and photography. This mode of apprehending Djenné is principally about fear and loss and is dominated by a desire to record and protect. It is also infused with an element of nostalgia and danger and, as will be described in Chapter 6, part of a wider desire from tourists for an emotionally authentic journey. Most people who visit Djenné want to see the traditional architecture less for the fact that it is a particular form of architecture and more for the place and time it stands for: a 'medieval' city, a city that time has passed by, a city without technology, where everything is built in mud. If you look in one direction and catch a glimpse of a small boy riding on a

donkey, past some mud bricks drying in the sun by the river, you could be forgiven for thinking that things in the town have not changed much in hundreds of years .

Yet, of course, they have. Djenné is connected in every modern way to the outside world. It hosts visitors from all over the globe, has media access including internet, mobile technology and satellite television. So on one hand there are tourists, heritage officials and politicians who want Djenné to be an ‘eternal city’ and fulfil their longing for a place where vernacular architecture is the limit of people’s imaginations and desires, where the things that denote modernity, such as electricity pylons or tarmac roads must remain hidden or on the outside. On the other hand, there are the people in Djenné who are aware that they must accommodate the tourists’ and officials’ wishes while trying to find a place for themselves in the 21st Century. I will argue that the external ‘archival’ creation of Djenné feeds into local elite apprehensions of Djenné and often acts to re-enforce existing power structures and tensions. By legitimating certain forms of ‘knowing’ Djenné while downgrading others, the lives of people in Djenné are affected today by the evolution of Western imaginations of the town over centuries.

The creation of an archive

For the purpose of this thesis, the concept of Western archival knowledge in relation to Djenné refers to the body of written texts, photographs, public records, monuments and exhibitions primarily generated during the time of French colonisation of the Soudan. This French colonial ‘archival’ knowledge continues to be reshaped and recast by successive Malian governments since Independence (as discussed in Chapter 6). However, I will argue that an often romanticized colonial

archival approach to the cultural heritage of Djenné has consequences on the way that institutions such as UNESCO operate in Djenné today.

In his recollections of his feelings upon arriving at his first post in Goundam in northern Mali, Jean Clauzel, a French colonial administrator, gives us an insight into the paternalistic and romantic feelings of the French elite towards their territories in the 1950s:

Joy finally spread through me. I was truly faced with that of which I had dreamt during my year of preparation at the old lycée in the Sainte-Geneviève mountains, in the years of school and under the trees of Luxembourg, during my time in the army, faced with that which I had so hoped, and so longed for.
(Clauzel, 1989: 35)³⁹

Jean Clauzel talks about his time as a 'Commandant' in Mali as the apogee of his career. In part, the pride and dedication he brings to his role is linked to the memory of his friends who trained with him at the *L'Ecole Nationale de la France d'Outre Mer* (known as *L'Ecole Coloniale* until 1937), many of whom died as soldiers during the Second World War. He saw himself as the one person living out the life they had all imagined together during their student days. His journey to Mali therefore became a form of pilgrimage. This colonial imagination about Mali is not only relevant to one man dealing with the grief of losing his friends during a bloody war, it is part of a larger complex of emotions and preconceptions that are 'hidden' within the archive. The writings and images generated before and during the time of the French conquest and rule of the Soudan all contain these hidden desires and emotions to some extent.

³⁹ "Ma joie put s'épandre en moi. J'étais bien face à ce dont j'avais rêvé dans l'année de préparation au vieux lycée de la montagne Sainte-Geneviève, dans les années d'école et sous les arbres du Luxembourg, dans le temps d'armée, face à ce que j'avais tant espéré et tant attendu. »

Places like Djenné and Timbuktu were usually apprehended as part of an epic journey (Caillié, 1830; Park & Miller, 1907); and therefore objects and symbols of personal fascination and desire rather than external places. Many of the writings also demonstrate a need to index, catalogue and 'know' the new territories coming under French power.

Early writings by westerners about Djenné include a book written by Lieutenant Louis Desplagnes entitled: *Le Plateau Central Nigérien* (Desplagnes, 1907). Lieutenant Desplagnes spent two years in the French Soudan examining archaeological material as well as architecture. Like many people at the time, he postulated a North African diffusionist model of culture, finding Arabic influences in the architecture he encountered in West Africa. His travels took him to Djenné, as is described in a review of the book written by an author signing himself as H.R.P (1908: 107) in the journal *Man*:

In the final chapters the resemblance between the architecture of North Africa and that of Djenné and Timbuktu are well shown by illustrations; in fact, the book is admirably illustrated throughout. ... Lieutenant Desplagnes appears to hold that the so-called Soudanese and West African civilisations are wholly due to Phenico-Egyptian and Lyhico-Berber influences carried by successive waves of migration further and further south, a proposition which commends itself to anyone who has seen both the Soudan and North Africa.

The same reading of West African architecture can be found in the texts accompanying the 1931 Colonial Exhibition at Vincennes (discussed below).

Together with the material collections starting to be amassed in European museums, Mali, like the rest of Africa, began to be thought of as something that was culturally

indexable, in part as a necessary means of subjugation. This attempt to culturally categorise the world is still present in the output of UNESCO today (see for example UNESCO's 'Map of World Heritage'), albeit for reasons of preservation rather than subjugation. However, reduction is an inevitable consequence of indexing and it is the way in which Djenné has been 'reduced' to its architectural and archaeological heritage that will be explored in this chapter.

Of course, reduction is only an illusion, and the reality and complexity of a place remain for those living there, yet the act of reduction has very real consequences. Drawing on Freud, Derrida (1996) links our compulsion to create archives to our fear of loss and death:

If there is no archive without consignment in an *external place* which assures the possibility of memorization, of repetition, of reproduction, of reimpression, then we must also remember that repetition itself, the logic of repetition, indeed the repetition compulsion, remains, according to Freud, indissociable from the death drive. And thus from destruction. (Derrida, 1996: 12, original emphasis)

Derrida suggests that the current meaning of the word archive comes from the Greek *arkheion* meaning a house, domicile or address. This residence belonged to the superior magistrates, the archons who had the right to make the law. The archive is therefore an act of guardianship (and interpretation) and a localised activity, as Derrida suggests: "it is thus in this domiciliation, this house arrest, that archives take place." (1996: 2).

The 1931 Colonial Exhibition in Vincennes

In 1931, *L'Exposition Coloniale Internationale* was held in Vincennes in Paris and featured amongst its prized exhibits a 'Rue de Djenné' (Leprun, 1988: 152). The exhibition was publicised as '*Le Tour du Monde en un jour*' (Morton, 2000) and promised to show the general public the people, architecture, produce and business opportunities represented by the colonies. The aim of the exhibition was not only to bring the colonies to the French public, but to do so in as contextualized a sense as possible. It was important for the organizers to 'authentically' reproduce buildings, people and performances of the colonies. This appeal to authenticity also helped to create the dichotomy between the primitive 'inside' of the exhibition and the civilized outside, thus justifying Europe's ongoing colonial project:

Architecture summarized the cultures of colonial people in accessible images, metonymic representations of barbarity clothed in the familiar language of exoticism. (Morton, 2000: 7)

The West African pavilion occupied four hectares on the edge of a lake and comprised a '*Grand Palais*', a scaled down reproduction of the Djenné Mosque, an animist village, a restaurant and a series of recreated streets entitled the '*Rue de Djenné*'. The *Livre D'Or*⁴⁰, published in 1931 to accompany and illustrate the exhibition recounts a visitor's route around the pavilion:

Once the Palace explored, and after having admired from the top of the tower, accessed by a large lift, the panoramic view of the Exposition, the visitors... find themselves transported into the heart of Black Africa through the narrow

⁴⁰ Le Livre d'Or de l'Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris, 1931. Paris: Exposition Coloniale Internationale.

streets of Djenné, with their terraced two-storey houses, made of crude red 'pisé', like those one comes across on the edge of the Bani... In a nearby building, reproducing on an inevitably smaller scale the famous Djenné Mosque, a permanent cinema is set up where the public sees a series of films recently realised in West Africa.⁴¹

Morton explains that the Djenné Mosque and streets were intended to stand for a primitive stage of architectural sophistication and were juxtaposed with architecture found in other parts of the French Empire, such as *Indochine* (Indochina). The exaggeration of certain aspects of the replica Djenné Mosque, such as the wooden beams that were made to strut out decoratively, was a conscious attempt on behalf of the architects to convey the 'exoticism' of West African architecture. Leprun (1988) points out the subtle modification of the architecture, colour (in this case redder in colour than mud found in Djenné in the style of Ségou) and decorations were used to 'seduce' and prevent unsettling the exhibition visitor.

The plans for the pavilion were based on the written and photographic sources available to the architects at the time. The architectural precursors to the 1931 exhibition include the 1889 Universal Exposition in Paris where two small Mosques were included within the creation of a Senegalese village and the 1900 Universal Exposition when the West African exhibit included a Sudanese Mosque based on one of the Mosques at Timbuktu (probably partly based on Dubois' (1897) *Tombouctou la Mystérieuse* (Leprun, 1988: 115; Morton, 2000: 265).

⁴¹ « Le Palais parcouru, et après avoir admiré du haut de la Tour où les conduits rapidement un grand ascenseur le panorama de l'Exposition, les visiteurs ...se trouvent transportés au cœur de l'Afrique Noire à travers les ruelles étroites de Djenné, fidèlement reproduites, avec leurs maisons à terrasses et à étages, aux grossiers murs de pisé rouge, telles qu'on les rencontrent sur les bords du Bani... Dans une construction toute proche, reproduisant à une échelle forcément réduite, la célèbre mosquée de Djenné, est installé un cinéma permanent où le public voit défiler les film récemment tournée en Afrique Occidentale Française. » (Le Livre d'or de l'Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris, 1931. Paris: Exposition Coloniale Internationale: 85)

The presentation of the Mosque and the *Rue de Djenné* falls into the category named by MacCannell as re-presentation: “an arrangement of objects in a reconstruction of a total situation” (MacCannell, 1992: 78). As he goes on to describe:

Re-presentation always requires an arbitrary cut-off from what would have surrounded it in its original context, a frame...Re-presentations of *habitats* are popular features of natural history museums: some nicely preserved specimens of birds and small rodents in realistic postures may be shown occupying their ecological niches among the sand and grasses of the display cases.

The Mosques found in Djenné and Timbuktu have served for over one hundred years as a short hand symbol of West African architecture (Prussin, 1994: 107). Prussin argues that this West African architecture had a profound influence on Western architects such as Gaudi (Prussin, 1994: 110). Beyond architecture, this symbolic representation embodied the complexity of the relationship between the West and Africa. It denoted at the same time originality, exoticism and reductionism. Whether in print or in production, the Mosques were transformed into Western fantasies. As Morton (2000) states in reference to the Exposition in 1931, this ‘symbolized’ architecture had to balance a justification for the ongoing colonial presence in West Africa with a celebration of local culture. The culture represented therefore needed to be just ‘civilized’ enough. The exposition also made no reference to the violence of the French presence in West Africa and depicted the Djenné streets as bustling and prosperous, helped by the presence of traders brought over to lend controlled local character to the scene.

It is not my contention that the way that UNESCO presents Djenné today through its World Heritage project is comparable to the way in which West Africa was depicted

during the Colonial Exhibition of 1931. In fact, UNESCO aims to do exactly the opposite and promote the global understanding of local cultures. However, some uncomfortable parallels can be found in the way that 'real life' is airbrushed out of UNESCO's World Heritage Project and a complex picture is reduced to a few decontextualised symbols. When dealing with the candidature files that lead to the declaration of World Heritage sites, members of ICOMOS and other experts have to rely on a dossier put together by a selected (usually elite) part of the population. The candidature file follows a fairly strict template approach (frame) and is illustrated by carefully selected photographs. Additionally, the nomination and selection of World Heritage sites within UNESCO is a political act, carefully balancing the needs of the organization (UNESCO and its mandate) and those of the countries putting forward their candidature files. The internal logic of the World Heritage List is therefore far from straightforward, and like the Vincennes exhibition, is a snapshot of a particular political and social climate, with inbuilt justificatory mechanisms and blind spots. The power of the archive is consequently to refuse complexity and ambiguity and default to familiar apprehensions and approaches while at the same time 'hiding' a multitude of political, economic and emotional concerns.

The Malian state and the archive

Through initiatives such as the *Cartes Culturelles du Mali* (an inventory of cultural events and monuments found in each region of Mali), the Malian Government has been focussing its efforts on recognising its tangible and intangible heritage. It has also set up a number of cultural resources such as the '*Bibliothèque en langue Bozo*' in Djenné as part of the *Projet Bibliothèques en langues nationales*. Cultural missions, museums, libraries, inventories and media output such as documentaries made about

Cultural Festivals (as described in Chapter 7) and radio broadcasts concerning cultural heritage (e.g. *Radio Jamana's* programme 'Racines') all contribute towards the making of a national narrative about the importance of cultural heritage.

As Arnoldi (2006: 56) states:

In Mali, as elsewhere in Africa, the state's cultural agenda has involved a refocusing and revalorization of the precolonial past through performance and material culture.

Arnoldi goes on to describe how under Mobido Keita, the performing arts were an especially potent resource in the creation of an official national culture because they tapped in to a pre-existing strong attachment felt by many people for these types of performances. Consequently, arts and plays were used as a method of sensitising populations to socialist values. Under Moussa Traoré there was a continued emphasis on performing arts with the launch of the *Biennale Artistique, Culturelle et Sportive* (discussed in Chapter 5), an event organised by the Ministry of Education.

Beginning in the mid 1970s, attention began to be paid to Mali's tangible cultural heritage as increasing fears over its protection came to light. Accordingly, in 1976 the Ministry of Culture created the 'Division of Cultural Patrimony'. (Arnoldi, 1999). In 1992, under Alpha Oumar Konaré and a new multiparty state, a wave of liberalisation and privatisation swept through the cultural sector. People began openly to question the state monopoly over cultural performances and the *Biennale* was discontinued for over 10 years (Arnoldi, 2006: 62).

As will be described below in relation to archaeology, the leadership of President Alpha Oumar Konaré (himself a trained archaeologist) strongly focussed attention on

Mali's tangible cultural heritage (archaeological and built). Since Konaré, Mali has had great success with the promotion of its tangible cultural heritage (now having four World Heritage sites). In 2006, this success was complemented by UNESCO's declaration of the annual Festival of the *Yaaral et Dégal* (a Peul Festival marking the annual transhumance of cattle) as a *Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage* in UNESCO's third, and final Proclamation.



Figure 9. Cattle crossing at Sofara, near Djenné.

The annual Peul festival of the *Dégal* took place on the 25th November 2005.

The *Dégal* marks the descent of the cattle into the pastures of *Walodo Débo* where they will stay until the rainy season begins and they make their journey once again back to the north (Figure 9). During their transhumance, the cattle make their journey from the inner delta region all the way to Niger. The Festival is said to date back to 1821 when Sékou Amadou sedentarised the Peuls and it is an opportunity for the returning herders to reunite with their families and for people to be reunited with their cattle. Herders display their cattle to local dignitaries in a form of 'beauty

contest' and music, poetry recitals and dances are performed. The dramatic crossings of the river by the cattle on different days are arranged after a negotiation between farmers (who must have had enough time to cultivate) and the herders (who need new pastures for their cattle). A calendar is then drawn up indicating when local river crossing will take place and consequently the dates and places of celebrations.

The National Museum

In an article entitled *Overcoming a Colonial Legacy: The New National Museum in Mali 1976 to the Present*, Arnoldi (1999) charts the rise and resurrections of Mali's National Museum in Bamako. From its origins in 1953 as the *Musée Soudanais de Bamako*, a subsidiary part of the IFAN (*Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*) Museum in Dakar, the Museum has had a number of incarnations resulting in its most recent re-launch in 1993. As the *Musée Soudanais de Bamako*, it housed ethnographic objects collected to Western aesthetic requirements but considered of lesser value than those sent to museums in Dakar and France. The original focus of the museum was on material culture from just three ethnic groups, the Bamana, Dogon and Senufo.

After years of under-funding following Independence, a new focus was brought to the museum with the development of a 'National Museum Policy' in 1981. The museum shifted from being a temporary repository for objects to a final destination where objects could be showcased with open access for the public and technical and scientific training for its staff (Arnoldi, 1999). At the core of the new policy lay two principles: democratisation and decentralisation, with the planning of regional museums (e.g. the Sahel Museum of Gao, Dogon Museum at Bandiagara and a History Museum in Kayes). A museum in Djenné has long been conceptualised as

part of this original 1981 policy model although it is only now materialising, with building scheduled to start in 2008 despite numerous set-backs.



Figure 10. The National Museum in Bamako.

The museum was designed by a French architect and built in stabilised mud brick.

In 1983, the new National Museum complex, designed by the French architect Jean-Loup Pivin was unveiled to the public (Figure 10). The basic plan was inspired by the spatial layout of a Malian village setting with buildings situated around a large open space. Traditional mud-brick architecture was adapted into stabilised mud brick and stone buildings using local materials. This was a conscious effort to refer to Mali's long tradition of vernacular architecture. Arnoldi's (2006: 67) asserts that:

In choosing this style for the new National Museum, Mali reclaimed it from the repertoire of colonial symbols of power and redefined it as a wholly authentic and quintessentially Malian style, elevating it to the status of a national architectural style. The architectural style of the National Museum became the

visible, material symbol of the larger decolonizing project that was underway within the institution itself.

However, this position needs to be nuanced by the fact that the museum was not only designed by a French architect but also principally funded by the French Government. It could be argued that a National Museum in the form of a 'stabilized' adapted form of vernacular architecture fits wholly into a colonial imagination of an African museum. More recently, Arnoldi (2007) has argued the same point in reference to the erection of more than forty memorials in Bamako between 1995 and 2002 in a governmental effort to assert a new Malian national identity. Many of these monuments have been inspired by the architecture of Djenné and Timbuktu:

Mali's precolonial vernacular architecture serves as a cultural resource in the production of a new modern national architectural vocabulary. The stylized reinterpretation of these vernacular forms and the use of industrial materials locate them firmly in the present day (2007: 9)

Until recently, the National Museum of Bamako did not collect art by contemporary artists, partly due to lack of exhibition space and funds but also because:

Government administrators and external funders are generally more interested in supporting collecting programmes which they see as preserving and promoting Mali's Cultural Heritage. That is, categories of archaeological and ethnographic objects that are defined as 'traditional' material culture. (Arnoldi, 1999: 33)

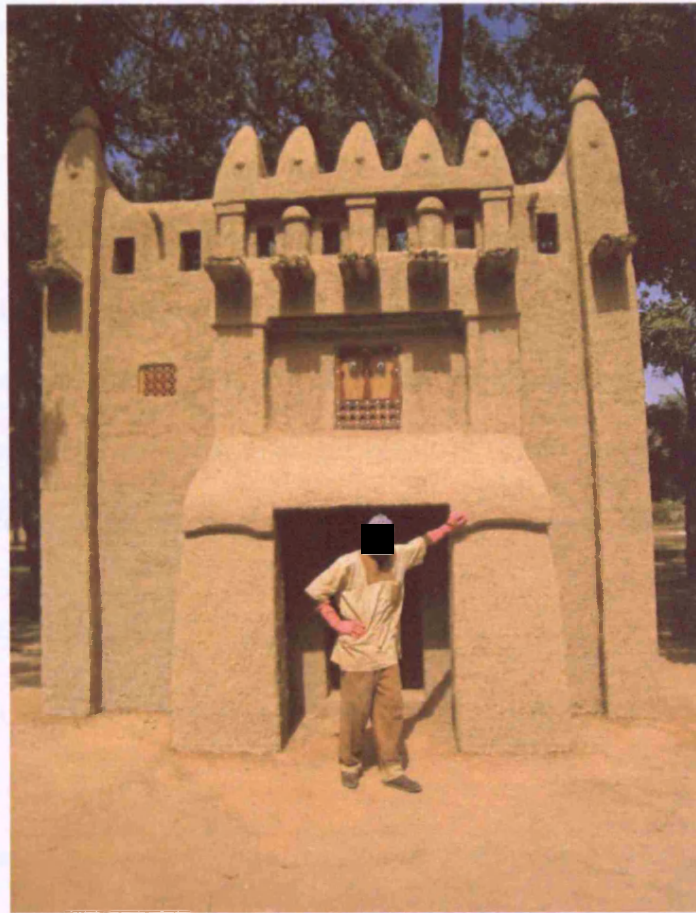


Figure 11. Façade of a traditional Djenné house at the National Museum

A mason stands in front of the newly erected façade built for the occasion of the *Terra* 2008 International Earthen Architecture conference in Bamako, February 2008.

The National Museum in Bamako is therefore still negotiating its role as a focus for Malian cultural heritage and fighting for relevance with the wider Malian community, its principal intended audience. It has had recent success through hosting weekly live musical events and temporary art and fashion exhibitions, showcasing contemporary Malian fashion designers. However, unsurprisingly the ‘traditional material culture’ referred to by Arnoldi still lies at the heart of its collection. A very important part of this is the terracotta objects found during excavations at Djenné-Djeno which have come to act a shorthand symbol for Malian archaeology across the world.

Djenné's presence at the National Museum was increased during the *Terra 2008* Conference (described below) when masons from Djenné were invited to the National Museum to build façades of Djenné houses in the museum's garden (Figure 11). The masons also built scaled down models of Djenné's Great Mosque and a traditional Djenné house for display in the temporary gallery. It is unclear how long these façades are intended to last however. One Djenné guide who happened to be present at the museum at the time of their construction confided in me that he did not like them being there as tourists may conclude that a trip to Djenné was unnecessary.

Djenné's archaeology

The modern day town of Djenné is surrounded mostly by unexplored archaeological sites, places that are littered with broken pottery and exposed funerary jars. It is however famous for the excavated site of Djenné-Djeno, first explored by the Roderick and Susan Keech McIntosh in 1977. It is made up of seventy settlement mounds which comprised the city (dated to ca. AD 400–1000, with the earliest settlement dated to the third century BC).

In the world of archaeology, the Niger Delta is famous for looting and loss (Panella, 2002; Renfrew, 2000). Due to the relatively small amount of information on the archaeological context of Djenné terracottas, they have come to symbolise the most devastating aspects of global illicit excavations: the loss of all knowledge about a culture before archaeologists have even had the time to study it. The extent of illicit excavations can be estimated through the number of trenches visible on the landscape in archaeological sites in Mali, as well as the large number of unprovenanced objects making their way into European and American museums.

According to Renfrew: “Over the past 25 years, a whole chapter in the prehistory and early history of West Africa has been destroyed” (2000: 54).

For a long time therefore, successive Malian Governments’ conversations with the outside world relating to the country’s cultural heritage have been dominated by the fear of loss and attempts to put in place measures of protection. A 1995 special edition of *‘African Arts’* entitled *‘Protecting Mali’s Cultural Heritage’* brings together the voices of the major figures dealing with (and in) Mali’s archaeological heritage. The edition marks the United States’ important decision to sign up to the ban on importing archaeological material from the Middle Niger region in 1993 through ratifying UNESCO’s 1970 Convention (discussed in Chapter 2). The illuminating thing about this special edition, as much as the content of the articles, is the choice of authors brought together by the editor. Each author represents a well rehearsed position in the debate about who actually owns Mali’s cultural heritage.

An introduction by the then President of Mali, Alpha Oumar Konaré (1995) begins with a plea for return and collaboration. He diplomatically praises the US decision to sign up to the ban and finishes by hoping that a more enlightened international community may lead to the return of Mali’s cultural treasures, as well as the returns of many of the country’s sons, scattered as they are across the world. The ex-President therefore draws a parallel between the dispersal of things and persons from their rightful place, in large part due to poverty. He says that the US decision “does justice to the integrity and dignity of the cultures of the Niger Valley” (1995: 27). Another article in the edition, by an ex Peace Corps volunteer turned African art dealer (Wright, 1995) purports to put forward the view of a Malian farmer, now criminalised for selling off ‘his’ cultural property found in the ground. His position is that while

poverty and a fight for survival remain the overwhelming driving forces in Mali, people should be allowed to dispose of whatever resources they have as they see fit. He is dismissive of archaeologists' claim to be able to recapture people's history through their work and sees them as using their high status to create a superior claim (while hiding the fact that they earn their livelihood through Mali's archaeological heritage).

UNESCO is represented by a short piece by Etienne Clement (1995) who while pleased with the US decision to sign up to the ban, hopes that European countries will follow. He goes on to praise the '*Vallées du Niger*' exhibition which opened at the *Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie* in Paris in 1994 as a step towards valorising Middle Niger material culture. However, he does not seem aware of the powerful effect such exhibitions have on the economic value of Middle Niger archaeological material.

The contradictions found throughout the 'African Arts' special edition do not end there. Many of the articles are illustrated with lavish photographs of the objects they describe. The archaeologists represented in the edition, the McIntoshes and the recently deceased Malian archaeologist Téréba Togola, devote their article to describing a person they call 'the good collector', a person who while driven by the aesthetic beauty of the objects he collects, maintains deep respect for the culture from which the object originates and opens up his collections for their future use. The 'bad' collector on the other hand, does not question the provenance of the objects he comes across, and is motivated "solely for investment or for the thrill of possession." (McIntosh *et al.*, 1995: 62).

However, nowhere within the special edition is there any fundamental questioning of the power imbalances that have led to Malian material culture being dispersed across

the world, or the effect of these imbalances on people living in Mali today (see for example Schmidt & McIntosh, 1996; Rowlands & Bedaux, 2001) . Samuel Sidibé (1995), the Director of the National Museum in Bamako, uses his allocated space to set out the extent of the ongoing looting in Mali and propose that a solution may lie in the dissemination of archaeological knowledge to wider local audiences. He cites the creation of cultural missions in Timbuktu, Dogon Country and Djenné as a step towards this dissemination.

Olaniyan's (2003) thesis on African cultural patrimony provides a strong counterpoint to the arguments set out above. He states that "Cultural patrimony is a cheap weapon of the weak to fight a battle for which it is ill-equipped: political and economic domination" (Olaniyan, 2003: 31). He also agrees with Fanon (1961) that:

You will not make colonialism blush for shame by spreading out little known cultural treasures under its eyes. (1961: 223 quoted in Olaniyan 2003: 31)

According to Olaniyan, the first reaction of African countries to political Western imperialism was political resistance. In the 1990s, 'culture' became Africa's favoured mode of resistance to Euro-American hegemony, a trend which is termed the 'cultural turn' and was due to widespread disillusionment with post-independence politics and the nation state. Growing disillusionment led political leaders to resort to the promotion of 'cultural pride' to divert attention away from their corruption and ineptitude. Extravagant spending on infrastructure had not led to a material improvement in people's lives.

For Olaniyan, the apogee of this trend of extravagance was the grandiose *Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture*, held in Lagos, Nigeria in 1977.

Accompanying these great exhibitions were cultural-philosophical concepts such as 'African Personality' which had evolved from concepts like *Négritude*. These were part of what Olaniyan terms the 'reclamatory' and 're-evaluative' strand of cultural politics. The other strand is the monumentalist and conservationist one, as seen in action in Djenné. Describing UNESCO's work in Africa, he says:

Employing instruments both of persuasion and coercion such as funding and legal statutes, the goal of such efforts is to identify, catalogue and conserve such monuments in their original locations as part of a vast network of a decentralized global museum. (2003: 28)

Pertinently for the case of Djenné, he sees the first strand of cultural politics, the reclamatory one, as often at odds with the state, whose institutions manage cultural patrimony as monuments (a more archival approach). He also sees the first strand of cultural politics as much the more powerful for effecting change:

The most engaging discourse of cultural patrimony, the one with profound ramifications for refashioning of subjectivities and rethinking of social relations across diverse differences, is the re-evaluative. (2003: 29)

Why is re-evaluation important? Olaniyan says that Molefi Kete Asante, the founder of Afrocentricity (Asante, 1987), puts it best: it is mental decolonization or an 'escape to sanity'. At the local level in Djenné, the cultural politics are such that there does not seem to be an appetite for 'reclaiming' archaeological heritage. In fact, most people in Djenné do not seem to feel emotionally involved with the pre-Islamic material culture found at Djenné-Djeno. What is present in Djenné is anger at the financial implications of their alienation from this part of their cultural heritage (Panella, 2002). In an interview, I was told that while the gathering of objects from the

archaeological sites was a common occurrence before the arrival of the Cultural Mission, hostility was felt towards people from outside Djenné coming to find objects. Ownership was therefore felt in terms of territoriality over a resource. At a national level however, as seen through the words of Alpha Oumar Konaré, the dispersal of Malian material culture throughout the world, and a consequent loss over its interpretation, is a significant problem for the Malian Government. However a little known dimension amongst Djenné's population is that the archaeological sites found at Djenné-Djeno also fulfil the 'reclamatory politics' criteria set out by Olaniyan.

Djenné's archaeology and reclamatory politics

In *The People of the Middle Niger* (McIntosh, 1998), McIntosh sets out his view of the archaeological record of the Middle Niger. He has identified signs of a heterarchical society from the record, with different centres of specialisations co-existing in the absence of a central hierarchical structure (this is however somewhat disputed by McDonald (2003) who suggests that Mali's archaeological record shows signs of it being a hierarchical society, through, amongst other findings, the unearthing of mass graves). McIntosh argues that his version of the archaeological record can be brought into current debates about civil society in Africa:

The Civil Society debate is vigorous, but is rather conducted in a deep-historical vacuum. Proponents of Civil Society in Africa would be heartened if they knew more about long historical trajectories. The archaeology and earliest history of many parts of the continent, and of the Middle Niger most especially, show unambiguously that Africa has long lived its own versions of Civil Society. (1998: 6)

He states that the search for local (indigenous) forms of civil society in Africa can have very real consequences for future trajectories of African states. Consequently, further archaeological research is essential not only to fill in the historical record of the region but also to provide contextual evidence for current debates about African Civil Society:

Many believe that the establishment of Civil Society is an obligatory condition for the promulgation of full human rights in Africa. This belief makes the search for pre-colonial antecedents more than merely academic. (1998: 6)

A second dimension in which the archaeological finds at Djenné-Djeno can be described as re-evaluative or reclamatory is that they challenge an Islamic diffusionist model of culture in West Africa. In reference to their archaeological excavations begun in the 1970s, the McIntoshes state:

These excavations, in addition to more than doubling the period of known history for this region, provided some surprises regarding the local development of society. The results indicated that earlier assumptions about the emergence of complex social organization in urban settlements and the development of long-distance trade as innovations appearing only after the arrival of the Arabs in North Africa in the seventh and eighth centuries were incorrect. The archaeology of Djenné-Djeno and the surrounding area clearly showed an early, indigenous growth of trade and social complexity.⁴²

This argument is further developed in Roderick McIntosh's most recent book *"Ancient Middle Niger: Urbanism and the Self-Organising Landscape"* (McIntosh, 2005). At the

⁴² Extract from *"Djenné-Djeno, An Ancient African City"* Brochure for the Djenné-Djeno Museum published by National Geographic, 1980.

time of his first excavations in Djenné in 1977, McIntosh described how historically, very little was known about Djenné, let alone the site of Djenné-Djeno. The first written source mentioning Djenné was published in 1447 by a Genoese merchant, Antonio Malfante, who was told about a city named 'Geni' (McIntosh, 2005: 6). The next mention in the historical record is in the personal history in Arabic by Es-Sadi in his *Tarikh es-Soudan*. In it, he speaks of Djenné as a blessed city, linking the world with Timbuktu through trade. Early archaeologists (e.g. the Frenchman Mauny who published a geographical overview of the region in 1961) found it difficult to make sense of the site at Djenné-Djeno due to its vast size and a lack of visible attributes an archaeologist would use as a short-hand for recognizing a city. The archaeology of the Middle Niger is therefore both a revelation and a provocation and has had political consequences in Mali, as McIntosh explains:

What makes the Middle Niger urban experience so unusual - and provocative - is the apparent lack here of a state-level organization at the core of its urbanization. Provocative enough that an archaeologist Head of State (our friend, Dr Konaré) has used presidential addresses to the nation purposefully to promulgate these cities as proof to his citizens of the deep roots of Malians' democratic instincts. (2005: 12)

Like the site of Great Zimbabwe (Fontein, 2000), the archaeological remains at Djenné-Djeno have been used by politicians to support, and some would argue inform, their political agenda. However, in my dealings with people in Djenné, finding indigenous antecedents to democracy or refuting an Islamic diffusionist model seemed to be of little concern. That is not to say that the archaeological evidence found at Djenné-Djeno will never take on an importance for people in Djenné or that they will not one day join in a debate about its meaning. At the moment, due to a lack

of access to the site (*Djennenkés* can only visit Djenné-Djeno if accompanied by a Cultural Mission guide) and education about the process of archaeology, many people in Djenné are left disenfranchised from a process they could enrich with their own knowledge and experience.

One man who did work with the McIntoshes over a four year period at Djenné-Djeno, now a retired farmer, told me of his understanding of the archaeological site. He described how the team had found four different kinds of earth during the excavations: one from the time of the Prophet Mohammed, one from the time of the arrival of the Bobos in Djenné, one from the time of the arrival of the French and one dating to today. He spoke warmly about his involvement in the archaeological project and explained the process of finding, washing and accessing objects into a database.

Since the departure of the McIntoshes, he has had no further involvement with archaeology and was saddened by the loss of the one document given to him by the McIntoshes relating to Djenné-Djeno. His understanding of the work of the Cultural Mission is that by protecting Djenné-Djeno they are protecting the objects found at the site. However, he feels that this is because the state wants to sell the objects themselves and keep the money, and it is for this reason that the site cannot be looted. He thinks that the money raised by the Malian state in this way could be used to help Djenné's population. As things stand, he feels that Djenné has not benefited materially from Djenné-Djeno despite ongoing claims that a museum will be built to attract tourists and increase visitor income. When asked about the wider population's attitudes towards Djenné-Djeno he reported that many people thought that the site had been sold to the 'whites' for the economic benefit of the government who have become the brokers of Djenné's cultural heritage.

Before the arrival of the Cultural Mission, the discovery of archaeological objects at Djenné-Djeno could have a truly transforming effect on peoples' fortunes. Stories of remarkable finds are still circulating today in Djenné. One such story involved a man who was out walking with his dog. His dog ran after a rabbit and followed it to a hole where the dog started digging. The owner saw something in the ground and on further inspection found that it was a bronze statue of a man mounted on a horse. Not knowing the value of the object, the man made sure that a local *antiquaire* (antiques dealer) heard about it and came to see it in his home. Thinking the he may get a few thousand CFA for the object but not wanting to open the bartering, the man was surprised when the *antiquaire's* first offer was 100,000 CFA (£100). The story was told to me humorously, with the incredulous owner of the statue finding the *antiquaire* bidding ever higher until he was finally paid 900,000 CFA (£900) for his find. The *Djennenké* telling me the story thought that the *antiquaire* would then have been able to go on and sell such an object for about 8 million CFA (£8000) in Bamako. Wherever or not the story is true, the important point is that it is still being retold today, long after sensitisation projects are supposed to have had an enlightening effect on local populations. As will be described later in relation to the riot in Djenné in September 2006, preventing access to the money represented by the town's cultural heritage is a dangerous flash point between *Djennenkés* and local authorities.

Djenné's architecture

As the discussion of the French Colonial Exhibitions has shown, the French introduced the concept of '*le style néo-Soudanais*' to Europe as early as 1889. The style came to represent 'authentic' West African architecture and to a large extent this

image has endured unchanged to this day⁴³. Although Djenné, Bandiagara, The Tomb of the Askias and the Mosques of Timbuktu have been singled out for special protection by UNESCO, iconic *néo-Soudanais* architecture can be found throughout Mali.

In their book about Djenné's architecture, Maas and Mommersteeg describe Djenné as 'living in the reflection of its great past' (Maas & Mommersteeg, 1992: 14) when the town played a pivotal role in the trans-Saharan gold and salt trade. An analysis of Djenné on purely architectural terms therefore finds today's Djenné lacking: it is a fading beauty, spoilt by modernity and threatened by change. In some ways, for Maas and Mommersteeg, Djenné's identity lies in the past and is a unique example of a synthesis of influences from North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and its colonial experience:

That this synthesis has created a particular (architectural) expression is apparent in the splendid mud architecture that is still the determining image of the town. (Maas & Mommersteeg, 1992: 13)⁴⁴

However, it is important to note that a 'romanticised' view of Djenné's architecture has evolved over the years from more nuanced accounts of life in the town. The airbrushing out of unsanitary living conditions, present in much of the most recent literature on the town is justified by the authors' primary focus on architecture. *'Djenné: Une Ville Millénaire au Mali'* (Bedaux & van der Waals, 1994) presents Djenné's architecture through photography, maps, illustrations and the reproduction

⁴³ For a discussion of the historical use of the term '*style soudanais*' see Maas, P and Mommersteeg, G (1992)

⁴⁴ « Que cette synthèse ait donné une expression particulière apparaît dans cette splendide architecture en argile qui détermine toujours l'image de la ville de Djenné. »

of early postcards. Despite much of the book being taken up with the documentation of Djenné's cultural and social life including its archaeological heritage, a description of the work of artisans and a final chapter questioning the future of the town, the result is again to present the maintenance of Djenné's architectural integrity as paramount. Djenné architecture is presented as at once a particularly African architecture of great artistic value, an historic monument of importance for Malian national identity and a source of inspiration for the continuation of modern African architecture (Schijns 1994: 171). In the conclusion to the book, there is an acknowledgment that Djenné's architecture faces many challenges, including the desire for better living conditions:

The need for comfort, for bigger door and window openings instead of the small openings cut into the thick walls of mud of the old houses, has also had a negative effect (on the architecture). (*ibid*: 174, my translation)⁴⁵

Djenné's architecture is therefore problematic. On the outside its façade is a source of national pride and inspiration while on the inside people often face challenging living conditions. These poor living conditions are present in some of the early writings about the town. In his descriptions of a traditional house in Djenné, Charles Monteil, a French colonial administrator (*Administrateur Adjoint des Colonies*) writing in 1903 follows his description of the façades of the houses with the qualification:

Such is the general style of these houses which, from the outside, appear luxurious; but in reality are not comfortable due mainly to the lack of ventilation in the rooms... The darkness and dirt mean that these houses are the

⁴⁵ « Le besoin de confort, d'ouvertures plus grandes pour les portes et les fenêtres au lieu des petites ouvertures percées dans les épais murs de terre des vieilles maisons, a également un impact négatif. »

refuge of choice for vermin, insects, scorpions, rats and other animals whose closeness, while always disagreeable, is sometimes dangerous. (1903: 135, my translation)⁴⁶

It is certainly unfair to criticise writings that are explicitly about Djenné's architecture for not adequately dealing with the social and cultural context of the town. These books are often products of collaboration between local actors (such as the masons) and international practitioners and are a celebration of the unique architecture found in the region. However, by stressing the importance of the preservation of architecture, the needs of *Djennenkés* are often downplayed. Additionally, by dealing principally with the elites in the town, the international collaboration between local actors and international sponsors often serve to re-enforce existing power structures. For example, the people whose houses were restored during the Dutch housing restoration project (discussed below) were in large part drawn from an already well served section of the population.

Maas & Mommersteeg's (1992) thorough survey of Djenné's architecture categorises houses into those with interior courtyards (*maisons à cour intérieure*) and those built around an enclosure (*maisons à enclos*). The houses with interior courtyards are again divided into two categories: the older ones, characteristically compact, built on several floors and constructed in *Djenné-Ferey*; and the newer ones, usually more spacious and constructed in *Toubabou-Ferey*. The houses built around an enclosure are characterised by their fragmentation (due to being built in stages or some parts of

⁴⁶ « Tel est le style général de ces habitations qui, du dehors, paraissent luxueuses ; mais en réalité ne sont pas confortables par suite surtout du manque d'aérations des pièces...L'obscurité et la malpropreté font de ces maisons les refuges d'élection de la vermine, des insectes, des scorpions, des rats et autres bestioles dont le voisinage, peu agréable toujours, est dangereux quelquefois. »

the house falling into ruin). Some of these houses will eventually become houses with interior courtyards.



Figure 12. Traditional house with *Façade Toucouleur* in Djenné

The *Façade Toucouleur* can be recognised by its overhanging screen.

Of most interest to the tourists visiting Djenné however, are the façades of the houses. There are three styles of façade in Djenné: la *Façade Marocaine*, la *Façade Toucouleur*, and the undecorated *façade*. The undecorated *façade* may be so by design, or may have become so through lack of upkeep. The *Façade Toucouleur* (Figure 12) is differentiated from the *Façade Marocaine* through the overhanging ‘screen’ on the front door. A technical description of the meaning of the façades can be found in the literature (Bedaux & van der Waals, 1994; Maas & Mommersteeg, 1992; Marchand, 2003), contrasting with a lay interpretation that can be heard when speaking to the guides in Djenné. The guides now include the houses restored by the Dutch (discussed below) in their itinerary around the town.

Architecture and Change in Djenné

The architecture of Djenné, like everything else in the town, is constantly changing. Most notably in the last few hundred years, the masons of Djenné have changed the technology they use to build mud bricks from the pre-colonial *Djenné-Ferey* to the current use of *Toubabou-Ferey*. Before colonial times, the masons of Djenné built using hand moulded cylindrical bricks called *Djenné-Ferey* (Figure 13). In an interview with a retired mason, I was told that these old bricks were ideally made from a mixture of mud, rice husks, *beurre de karité*, a powder made from the fruit of the *Néré* tree and a powder made from the fruit of the Baobab tree. This mixture would be broken down with the use of animal urine and dung until it was ready to be moulded and ‘baked’ in the sun.

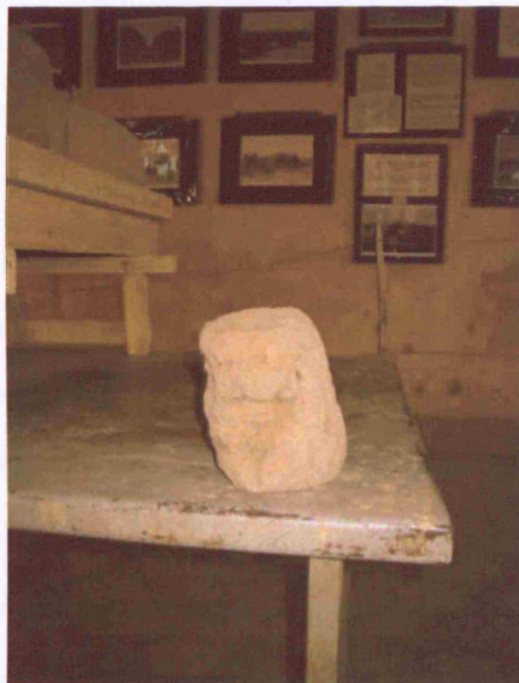


Figure 13. Hand moulded cylindrical brick called *Djenné-Ferey*

The brick is on display in Djenné as part of a temporary exhibition on Djenné's architecture held in *La Maison du Peuple*, February 2008.

Djenné-Ferey bricks are remembered by today's masons as more hardwearing than contemporary *Toubabou-Ferey* bricks. *Toubabou-Ferey* are square bricks, made using wooden moulds and, due to their shape, easier to manufacture and build with. They are usually only made of mud and rice stalks as the other ingredients are now too expensive, such as the *beurre de karité* that has a high commercial value as the base for beauty products and other manufactured goods. As well as the technology, a second fundamental change has therefore been the choice of materials used for making bricks. While some materials are becoming increasingly unaffordable, other materials, such as the wood needed for the construction of the roofs (*bois de ronîer*), are becoming increasingly rare.

Furthermore, a change in agricultural practice that has led to the degradation of the quality of the bricks used in Djenné has been the introduction of mechanical rice de-huskers. These machines, that can be seen working at the river's edge, reduce the rice husks to powder, a far less appropriate ingredient for bricks than the manually extracted husk. The husks are used to bind the mud in a way that the powder does not achieve. Masons are reduced to expensively importing rice husks from outside Djenné and substituting, in part or in whole, the stalks of the plants for the rice husks. Additionally, the exposed stalks prove to be irresistible meals for the animals living in the compound so some accessible parts of people's homes are simply nibbled away. Today, the only occasions when houses in Djenné are built with traditional ingredients such as the *beurre de karité* are when they are commissioned by rich expatriates in the town. Building to such high standards is beyond the means of the ordinary *Djennenké*.

Many masons in Djenné consider that the bricks they build with today are of lesser quality than those used in the past not only for the reasons stated, but also due to the nature of the mud itself. Decreased rainfall and river levels and the subsequent impact on fish stocks has led to a weaker concentration of calcified fish bones that reputedly made the mud resistant. Additionally, pollution in the river in the form of strands of plastic bags and bottle tops are now found in the mud and simply applied to the façades of the houses during the annual protective re-layering of mud.

These factors have led to the increasingly common practice of using fired clay tiles to protect the outside of Djenné houses. The tiles are fixed to the house with the use of cement, a practice that many heritage experts warn can fundamentally undermine the entire structure of the building. An often cited example of mud and cement not mixing is the Mosque at Mopti that was partly covered in cement to reduce the cost of its upkeep. The cement part of the building began to degrade the banco underneath and a restoration project had to be brought in to rip off the cement and restore the Mosque back to its original form (Figure 14).



Figure 14. The Mosque at Mopti

The cement restoration of the Mosque (upper part) had to be removed and rebuilt.

The practice of using tiles on Djenné's houses is condemned by the Cultural Mission and UNESCO yet it is gaining in popularity amongst residents because it promises to solve the regular problem of finding the funds to re-mud houses. Despite the initial high outlay, tiled houses can last for years without needing maintenance, meaning peace of mind for their occupants. The difficulty of accumulating wealth in Djenné (described in Chapter 6) is another reason for people tiling their homes when they have the available funds. Schijns (1994: 173) suggests that the use of tiles is linked to local notions of prestige and modernity.

In the past, the use of tiles was reserved for the rich people of Djenné (such as the owners of *Millionso* in the quartier of Kanafa, which is entirely covered in tiles) or only for use on the floors of houses. Now, even less well-off residents tile the outside of their houses because they feel that in the long term it makes more financial sense to do so. At the end of 2005, one tile cost 20 CFA (£0.02). The cost of a masons' labour

is higher for tiling than for re-mudding as it takes more time but year on year, the peripheral costs associated with re-mudding are rising. For example, in 2005, a bag of rice husks cost 1500 CFA (£1.50), preparing the mud by the river costs 500 CFA (£0.50), with an additional 250 CFA (£0.25) per cart used to transport the mud. A study undertaken by a French architect in conjunction with *Djenné Patrimoine* in 2006 revealed that tiling houses was fourteen times more expensive than using banco with added *beurre de karité*, and eighteen times more expensive than using ordinary banco (2800 CFA/£2.80 per square metre for tiles as opposed to 196 CFA/£0.19 for banco with *beurre de karité* and 152 CFA/£0.15 for simple banco).⁴⁷ The evidence would therefore suggest that despite an intuitive feeling amongst some *Djennenkés* that the use of tiles is a good long term investment, the reality may be very different.

When asked about the practice of using tiles, many masons felt uncomfortable about their use yet unable to refuse the requests of the owners of the houses that are their moral responsibility. I was told on numerous occasions that if they did not give in to the request of tiling someone's house, then another mason would do the job leading to the breakdown of their relationship with the house. Tiles can crack and let in water but masons are skilled in their repair and provided that the repair is done quickly no damage should be done to the mud bricks beneath⁴⁸. I was also told that it was very important to use the best quality tiles available, meaning those that have been fired correctly. A blackened tile usually has not been fired correctly and may be brittle.

⁴⁷ For a full breakdown of costs including labour costs, see *Djenné Patrimoine Informations*, No. 21, Automne 2006.

⁴⁸ This is disputed by the Cultural Mission, *Djenné Patrimoine* and most other 'heritage experts' who claim that tiles only last for a few years and cannot be considered a long term solution. In fact, advocating the use of tiles in Djenné is tantamount to heresy.



Figure 15. Cement construction in administrative district of Djenné

In 2005, the local authorities chose to build their administrative buildings in cement.

An added dimension to the debate surrounding the upkeep of houses is the fact that local authorities in the area, operating with restricted budgets, cannot meet the costs of upkeep on banco buildings and therefore build their administrative buildings, on the outskirts of town, in cement (Figure 15). Similarly, administrative buildings within the town are undermining the conservation message. In one instance, the house of the *Sous-Préfet* near the *Campement Hotel* in Djenné was covered in tiles leading to the intervention of the Cultural Mission who insisted on their removal⁴⁹. As a compromise, the Cultural Mission has agreed to pay for the ongoing annual upkeep of the house.

Amongst Djenné residents, there is a high level of awareness that the attraction of the town to tourists is primarily because of its architecture. The masons themselves are

⁴⁹ Personal communication, February 2005.

somewhat resentful that they do not derive more direct benefit from tourism for their labour, and in the past have demanded a share of the tourist tax to better reflect the importance of their role within the tourist equation. One mason told me:

That's why tourists come. To see the houses, built one or two hundred years ago, in banco, still standing. Well, that is what fascinates (people), that is what attracts them. It's what gives us our value.⁵⁰

With the increasing cost of living in the town and new technologies (such as the mechanical rice de-huskers) all parts of the population are updating and changing their subsistence practices. For example, while in the past fishermen used to use string nets costing 50,000 CFA (£50) for one hundred meters of net. The majority now opt for a cheaper plastic version costing only 15,000 CFA (£15). Not only is the plastic version cheaper but it is also more efficient at catching fish⁵¹. However unlike changes in architectural practices, the changes in fishing practices go uncommented upon by heritage officials in the town. A frame of reference for what can and cannot change within the town is therefore inconsistent and sometimes contradictory.

The arguably arbitrary nature of the heritage interventions in the town has led to some frustrations. Joseph Brunet-Jailly (founder of *Djenné Patrimoine*) feels that for there to be true 'restoration' or 'protection' of houses, there should be a revival of architectural techniques, such as the production and use of *Djenné-Ferey* (for an answer to this accusation see Bedaux *et al*, 2003: 58). He feels that the houses restored

⁵⁰ « C'est pour ça que les touristes viennent. Voir des maisons, faites il y a un ou deux siècles, en banco, qui ne sont pas tombées. Bon, ça sa fascinent, sa attirent. C'est ce qui fait notre valeur. »

⁵¹ Personal Communication, January 2006.

during the Dutch housing restoration project, described below, would have benefited from using the old technology when appropriate:

If you take an ambiguous position towards the restoration of heritage, people find it hard to understand, if we say that architecture is the masons' knowledge, the embodiment of this knowledge, and their relationship with house owners, why is it that not more is made of the technique that these masons use?⁵²

In a round-table discussion about Djenné's architecture broadcast by Djenné's local *Radio Jamana* in June 1999, a representative of *Djenné Patrimoine* and the ex-Director of the Cultural Mission put forward their respective positions⁵³. *Djenné Patrimoine* advocated the de-classifying of some parts of the town to allow for development and change. They felt that when restoration took place, as in the case of the Dutch housing restoration project, it should be done following the strictest criteria set out in the Venice Charter⁵⁴, which for them meant using the old technique of *Djenné-Ferey* when appropriate. At the same time, *Djenné Patrimoine* would like to see parts of the town built *en dur* (in cement) using the expertise of international architects to help replicate the traditional appearance of Djenné. The Cultural Mission felt that this position was contradictory and referred to the masons as the locus of authenticity. During the Dutch housing restoration project, it was the masons themselves who felt unable to restore the houses using *Djenné-Ferey* technology and so the use of *Toubabou-Ferey* was considered appropriate. The Cultural Mission also largely rejected declassifying part of the town or bringing in international architectural experts to find new concrete solutions to Djenné's housing problems. Again, this was

⁵² Personal Communication, December 2005

⁵³ The transcription of the debate can be found at www.djenne-patrimoine.asso.fr/racine/dp8.htm

⁵⁴ The terms of the 1964 Venice Charter can be found at http://www.icomos.org/venice_charter.html

in part in reference to the town's masons who would perhaps become alienated from the town's architecture if international architects replaced traditional expertise.

The Dutch Housing Restoration Project

The housing restoration project undertaken and funded by the Dutch Government between 1994 and 2004⁵⁵ encountered many of the issues faced by Western Heritage interventions described throughout this thesis. The Dutch have a long standing interest in Djenné, beginning in 1975 when a team from the University of Utrecht undertook archaeological excavations in Djenné and Mopti (Bedaux *et al*, 2003: 9).⁵⁶ They were followed out to Mali by many other Dutch researchers including geographers, anthropologists, architects and archaeologists. A group of architects at the University of Eindhoven have been undertaking detailed documentation of Djenné's architecture since the beginning of the 1980s (Maas & Mommersteeg 1992: 7). It is through this long term involvement with Djenné that the Dutch housing restoration project was born.

The aim of the project was to restore a core number of representative houses that would stand as an inspiration for the rest of the town⁵⁷. The project also undertook a thorough survey of a significant proportion of houses in Djenné and catalogued their state of repair. Like all restoration projects, it needed to make choices:

⁵⁵ According to Epskamp (2002) the collaborative relations between the Netherlands and Mali (1996-2003), which focused on supporting Mali's World Heritage was in accordance with Dutch development policy. The policy identified the cultural sector as a future sustainable source of income. Heritage is seen as a way of creating jobs through tourism thus leading to development. However, the work was judged in terms of capacity building and heritage site should be given the opportunity of becoming sustainable in terms of maintenance and management, security and site management. Efforts were therefore made to train people both locally and nationally.

⁵⁶ In order to contextualise the giving of aid money through cultural heritage projects in 1997/1998 PNUD Mali Report 'stated that 74% of aid came from seven sources: the World Bank, France, EU, UN, US and Japan. Others donors were the IMF (5%), Fonds Africain de Développement (4%) and the Dutch Government (4%). ('Aide, Endettement et Pauvreté' *Rapport 2000 sur le Développement Humain au Mali*, PNUD/MSPAS /Banque Mondiale).

⁵⁷ Fear over the loss of houses was prompted by a Dutch study that showed that of 134 monumental houses documented in 1984, 40 were gone completely and another 34 replaced by the time a new census was carried out in 1995 (Personal Communication, Prof. Rogier Bedaux, 13/05/08).

We took as a starting point for the inventory of houses to restore those houses that have monumental façades because they have characterised for a long time the *authentic image of the town*. This through the testimony of the old postcards and photographs of Rousseau at the end of the Nineteenth Century.

(Bedaux *et al.*, 2000)⁵⁸

My translation, my italics.

The choice of houses to be restored was therefore from the outset explicitly Eurocentric⁵⁹ and the project proper was launched after an exhibition held at the *Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde* in Leiden entitled: 'Djenné, the Most Beautiful Town in Africa' in 1994. The exhibition was also shown in Bamako and Djenné (Bedaux *et al.*, 2003: 46). The original project team was made up of archaeologists from the *Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde* in Leiden and an architect from Breda, who worked with Malian heritage professionals, the National Museum in Bamako, local officials in Djenné, including the Cultural Mission, and the masons. The project was overseen by a 'Scientific Committee' that met annually to discuss the project's progress. Inevitably, the project ran into some difficulties and the number of restored houses had to be scaled down from an original aim of two hundred. The restoration work started in 1996 and ended with a little less than one hundred restored houses and the publication of a book on the architecture of Djenné in February 2003 (Bedaux *et al.*, 2003).

⁵⁸ 'On a pris comme point de départ de l'inventaire des maisons à restaurer les maisons à façades monumentales parce qu'elles caractérisaient depuis longtemps l'image authentique de la ville. En témoignant les anciennes cartes postales et les photographies de Rousseau de la fin du 19^e siècle.'

⁵⁹ The choice of houses to restore was made by the Dutch project team and the Cultural Mission, approved by the project's *Comité de Pilotage* (made up of local leaders, representatives of masons, local associations and development committees) and the *Comité Scientifique* (made up of the Malian ministries involved, the Cultural Mission, UNESCO, the National Museum in Bamako, the *Institut des Sciences Humaines* in Bamako, architects, the Dutch embassy, and the National Museum of Ethnology, presided over by the Dutch Minister of Culture). Personal Communication, Prof. Rogier Bedaux, 13/05/08.

Some of the unexpected consequences of the project can be contextualised through ethnographic knowledge of Djenné. For example, at the outset house owners feared that consenting to restoration work on their houses would threaten their ownership rights. A rumour of houses being 'sold' to the Dutch in some ways echoed similar rumours of the archaeological sites being sold. As discussed above, the Cultural Mission's involvement with the project also led to some resentment and mistrust. Another issue that inevitably came up was the issue of change, as noted by Marchand:

Households that agree to participate in the project are expected to make no further structural or planning modifications to their houses...In my view, the house takes on the status of protected monument above and beyond its function as a home. (Marchand, 2001: 150)

There was a strong desire among many house owners to use the project as an opportunity to improve their houses. Changes in family structure and consequently accommodation needs, a desire for a more open social space in which to welcome guests and a desire for brighter, more airy spaces led to some clashes between the restoration project and home owners (Rowlands, 2003). As much as possible the Dutch team tried to find mutually agreeable solutions. Additionally, while the project intended to promote and 're-launch' an enthusiasm for the architecture of Djenné amongst residents, in some ways it served to set up expectations of help from house owners who believed that the Dutch relationship with the houses, once established, would continue indefinitely. The Dutch team had made provisions for handing over the ongoing *crépissage* costs of the restored houses to the Malian government (it was agreed that this would take place every two years), however, the funds needed for

ongoing maintenance and (10 million CFA, promised by the Ministry of Culture) have taken many years to materialise⁶⁰.

Throughout the restoration project, there appeared to be two positions. First, that of the Dutch, which focused on the architecture of Djenné and its promotion (and had as a subsidiary focus the alleviation of poverty) and second, the position of many of the residents who inevitably considered their houses in more practical and immediate terms. Those who had their houses restored tended to speak about the benefits of the project primarily in economic and practical terms and wanted to maintain a relationship with the Dutch who were regarded as patrons. Pride in owning a newly restored house was important but mostly came second to the alleviation of economic burden that the restored house represented⁶¹. For those in Djenné who did not have their houses restored, the project served less, as had been intended, as inspiration but instead it seemed to reinforce the view that help should, and would, come from the outside and in time more such projects would come to Djenné.

The Dutch housing restoration project can be seen as an attempt to create a physical archive of Djenné's houses for posterity. It also led to the direct employment of masons, workmen, carpenters, tile-makers, wood merchant, amongst many others, for a period of seven years. However, from the outset the project was beset by the problems of Djenné's political and economic realities. To summarise, first, the choice of houses to restore caused consternation among the *Djennenké* who were excluded. Inevitably, many of the houses chosen for restoration belonged to the *Grandes*

⁶⁰ In May 2008, the Cultural Mission finally confirmed that it had received the ongoing funds, personal communication with Prof. Rogier Bedaux (13/05/08)

⁶¹ In Dogon country where the Dutch are also undertaking architectural restoration work their project included immediately effective measures to help local populations such as digging wells and building new roads to allow access to abandoned villages, thus protecting the architecture.

Familles in Djenné⁶² (houses with monumental façades) and therefore looked like a case of the elite serving themselves. Second, *Djenné Patrimoine* did not feel that the true spirit of restoration had been respected in the choice of material used, and therefore further local political turmoil ensued⁶³. A third problem encountered by the project was one of ownership and questions arose as to what rights householders were passing on to the Dutch when allowing them access to their houses. Fourth, householders resented the fact that the project did not allow them a greater degree of self-determination and an opportunity to improve their living conditions by for example, extending their homes or adding windows. The themes that emerge from the experience of the Dutch housing restoration project are therefore lack of trust due to the circulation of rumours (many started by rival heritage factions in Djenné), a need for further clarity in objectives, financial incentives and self-determination. These themes come out time and time again when considering the impact of outside cultural heritage projects coming to Djenné and could be considered to have reached their logical conclusion during the riot of September 2006.

Another dimension that has not yet been internalised by the Dutch, UNESCO or *Djenné Patrimoine* is that despite the housing restoration project's concern with the 'authentic image of the town' and *Djenné Patrimoine's* concentration on authentic materials, there does not seem to be an anxiety about authenticity amongst *Djennenkés* themselves. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, work with artisans in Djenné shows that authenticity is a negotiated practice. Marchand describes the

⁶² This was due to the fact that architectural criteria were used for selection. Representative houses owned by poorer *Djennenkés* were also included, as were a certain number of restored monumental buildings owned by poorer residents (Personal Communication, Prof Rogier Bedaux, 13/05/08).

⁶³ Although *Djenné-Ferey* bricks were used in exceptional circumstances, such as the restoration of the house of the *Chef du Village*.

masters in Djenné as having an 'expert discourse' made up of transmitted technical, magical and ritual knowledge, as well as claims to ancestry (Marchand 2001: 155). The client-audience invests faith in their practices and thus their built environment is reproduced. 'Authenticity' in a Western built heritage sense is therefore for the majority of the population an invisible concern. It is only made visible through the work of heritage officials in the town who use the concept to claim authority over the way cultural heritage should be managed.

The Cultural Mission

The Cultural Mission in Djenné was established in 1994 as part of the Malian Government's commitment to protecting the cultural heritage recognised by UNESCO in Mali. Cultural missions were also established in the country's two other World Heritage sites at the time, Bandiagara (Dogon Country) and Timbuktu. At first, as their names indicate, the Cultural Missions were supposed to be temporary services put in place to help local populations best manage their own cultural heritage. Now, the Cultural Missions have become permanent structures, partly due to their success, but also due to the recognition that their 'mission' has not yet been accomplished. UNESCO help the personnel of the Cultural Mission indirectly, principally through training programmes such as those put in place as part of 'Africa 2009' (for example one of the Cultural Mission staff attended one of the *Professionnels Africains du Patrimoine* Conferences in Porto Novo). 'Africa 2009' is a project for the conservation of immovable cultural heritage in Sub-Saharan Africa (see Saouma-Forero, 2006 for more details). It is made up of a partnership between African cultural heritage institutions, CRATerre EAG (The Centre for the Research of Earthen Architecture based at the School of Architecture in Grenoble), UNESCO's World Heritage Centre

and ICCROM (International Centre for the Study and of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property).

Contrary to many people's beliefs in the town, UNESCO does not give money to the Cultural Mission directly. Indirectly, however money is channelled through UNESCO to undertake projects such as the *Plan de Gestion de la Ville* (the management plan, currently being undertaken with the help of outside consultants designated by UNESCO). UNESCO also facilitates the Cultural Mission's work with partners such as CRATerre and gives them access to the *Centre de Patrimoine Mondiale*, ICCROM and ICOMOS who can be counted on to find financial backing for projects. Necessary equipment such as computers, projectors and digital cameras can be sourced through the Africa 2009 Project⁶⁴. UNESCO also has a county-wide presence through an office in Bamako where they regularly organise conferences, usually for training purposes.

As well as their UNESCO focused partners, the Cultural Mission also works with the World Bank, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and with the Dutch Government. Day to day work of the Cultural Mission includes running the small museum housed in its premises on the outskirts of the town, accompanying visitors to the archaeological sites, creating inventories of the cultural goods kept in people's houses, overseeing archaeological excavations and heritage projects coming to the town and an ongoing project of sensitisation of the local population (through work with schools, and in the past with mobile theatres, visiting villages and patrol officers to archaeological sites.). The Cultural Mission also helps to promote Djenné's Cultural Heritage by entering

⁶⁴ The Dutch Government financed all the original equipment for the Cultural Mission: the architect's office, the computers, printers, photo equipment, as well as a 1995 photo exhibition, a 1999 exhibition held in a Koranic school and a 2004 exhibition held to mark the end of the first phase of the housing restoration project.

national and international competitions, such as the *Biennale de Ségou*, held in September 2004 (Described in Chapter 5).

Politically speaking, the Cultural Mission's status has changed with a change of President. Under Alpha Oumar Konaré (1992-2002), the Cultural Missions were floating structures that answered directly to the Culture Minister. Now all three Cultural Missions have become integrated into the Ministry of Culture and are consequently a couple more steps removed from power (Appendix 3). In terms of local politics, the Cultural Mission, by its own admission, is often disliked by the local population as it has to impose legislation that comes from Central Government. It is also sometimes unfairly blamed for other people's failings, such as the misuse of the tourist tax. Each tourist entering Djenné must pay 1000 CFA (£1) intended to be invested into tourism and infrastructure in the town. The money is collected by the *Mairie* who in 2004 declared 8 million CFA (£8000) in tourist receipts. However, none of the money has been re-invested in to tourism infrastructure in the town.

What is true, however, is that the Cultural Mission does benefit materially from heritage projects that come to the town. While it may be a fair assumption that helping its partners implement projects in Djenné would be part of the Cultural Mission's staff salaried work, in practice, projects that come to Djenné are accompanied by cash payments for the Cultural Mission. For example, the budget for the 2006 second phase Dutch restoration work in Djenné and the surrounding villages includes a salary for the Head of the Cultural Mission totalling 6000 euros⁶⁵ (£4600) over three years. This comes on top of the purchase of a car for the exclusive use of

⁶⁵ Projets de Conservation du Patrimoine Culturel du Mali :(deuxième phase), Ministère de la Culture Bamako (Mali) Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde Leiden (Pays-Bas).

the Cultural Mission (budgeted at 30,000 euros/£23,000) and an additional support budget of 3000 euros (£2300) for the year. The Cultural Mission's staff also derives additional personal income from accompanying tourists to the archaeological sites, a fact well known by the guides in Djenné.

The 2006 Riot

Heritage projects brought to Djenné are seen as 'cash cows' for those who have the legitimacy to benefit from them. The resentment this causes within the population cannot be underestimated, as was witnessed during the riot that broke out in September 2006 over what the population saw as 'unauthorised' restoration work on the Mosque carried out by the Aga Khan Trust. According to *Djenné Patrimoine*⁶⁶ the riot broke out because the population and the masons had not been informed about the project, although the Imam and the *Chef du Village* had given their consent. In anger and frustration, young people stormed into the Mosque and pulled down the fans and sound system (that had been paid for by the American Ambassador), then went on to vandalise the Imam's three cars and the Cultural Mission where the buildings and some archaeological objects were badly damaged. The *Chef du Village* and his wives' houses were also attacked. Police were called in from Mopti and tyres were burnt on the bridge at the entrance of the town to prevent their entry. There followed violent clashes between the police and Djenné's population and the death of one young man of 22 who drowned while trying to escape from the police. Many young people were arrested and held in prison in Djenné. The prison was so full that

⁶⁶ Djenné Patrimoine Newsletter Number 21, Autumn 2006. See www.djenne-patrimoine.asso.fr

the soldiers who had come as police back-up were forced to use the *Maison du Peuple* as a temporary holding place for people they had arrested.

It is difficult to gain an adequate picture of the events of the 20th September 2006. However, in an interview in February 2008 with the person thought to be responsible for provoking the riot, one version of the story was put to me. As well as his oral narrative, he had kept a diary of events from the time of the riot which he showed me. Adama, in his early forties, is widely known in Djenné as the person to have provoked the riot, a charge he disputes.

His version of events is that he had been to the Mosque on the morning of the 20th September to see the work he had heard the Aga Khan Trust was undertaking in order to deal with the problem of bats in the Mosque. However, when he got there he found that the Aga Khan staff, accompanied by a representative from the Cultural Mission and a member of AMUPI were on the roof and that they had dug a large hole which was covered in a plastic sheet in the most 'sensitive' part of the Mosque, near the Imam's place of prayer. In conversations with others about the riot these few 'facts' kept recurring: that the Aga Khan staff dug a hole on the roof, that they had obscured the hole with a cover and that their actions were very suspicious given that they were supposed to be dealing with bats inside the Mosque. Some of the more fanciful stories told include suspicions that the Aga Khan staff were trying to take some of the earth away (by putting it in a box), that they were digging up something sacred they knew was there (especially due to the geographical location of the hole) and that somehow they were intending to do harm to the Mosque.

Returning to Adama's narrative, he claims to have asked the representative of AMUPI what was going on and was told that it had been announced during the Friday

prayers. A discussion then ensued between Adama and a representative of the Cultural Mission. Adama is a guide and resents the fact that he is not authorised to take white people into the Mosque when the Cultural Mission do so with impunity. The son of the Mosque guard was then said to have started fighting with the man from AMUPI as he felt that they had no right to be digging a hole without authorisation. Adama then left the Mosque as things were beginning to get out of control.

Downstairs, lots of young people had started to swarm into the Mosque and some began to destroy the technical equipment brought by the Aga Khan staff and rip the fans from the ceilings. Adama says that he had no further role in the riot and in fact consciously avoided the scene until the next day, when he found out that the *militaires* (soldiers) who had come to Djenné to quieten the riot were looking for him. He fled *en brousse* (surrounding countryside) and waited for things to calm down. After a week, he handed himself in to police and was locked up in Djenné's prison for three months, together with eleven other young men. Although over forty people had been arrested on the day of the riot, most were let free after a payment from their families. Adama was however not able to afford this and consequently had to serve his sentence. After two weeks detention he was seen by a judge in Djenné who asked him questions about the riot. He however claims to have had no legal representation and to his knowledge no formal judgement was made against him. He was finally released from prison on the 26th December 2007.

Another person present during the riot, Lassina, lives in a house very near the Mosque. He is a retired *fonctionnaire* (civil servant) in his early 60s. He claims that on the day before the riot, the Aga Khan Trust were working on the Mosque and people

began to become suspicious of a hole they were digging on the roof. He describes it as being 60cm x 40cm, deep and crucially, covered in a plastic sheet. Suspicions were confirmed when the head of the *barey-ton* (masons association) denied any knowledge of the work. Rumours began to circulate about what was really being done, especially due to the unfamiliarity of the equipment used by the Aga Khan Trust. People wondered whether they were trying to put some kind of device like a computer in the hole or somehow damage the Mosque (rumours of a bomb even circulated). The next day, the Wednesday of the riot, the rumours had gained momentum and many people had come to see what was going on in the Mosque. They felt that they needed to tell the authorities that an unauthorised hole was being dug on the roof and so people went off to find the Imam. Other young people went in to the Mosque and started ripping down the fans in anger at they symbolised 'white' intervention (having been given by the US Ambassador).

The Aga Khan staff fled together with the Cultural Mission staff and the police arrived on the scene. However, as the violence escalated, police re-enforcements were sent from Mopti (and had a lot of trouble crossing the river due to the slow co-operation of the people at the *bac*, the boat operators). Finally an army presence arrived on Thursday to restore order. There followed a period of violence, described by everyone I spoke to in Djenné as surprising and indiscriminate. Lassina's son was pulled from his bed where he was lying sick from malaria and beaten in front of his father. Lassina tried to interfere and was himself threatened with a beating. He fled to the *gendarmerie* but they said they couldn't help him. For a few weeks after the event, many people could not leave their houses for fear of being beaten. The Minister of Culture at the time came to Djenné and together with the town's *Député* declared that all those responsible for the riot would be found and held to account. This stance

led the *Député* to lose his job in the elections of 2007 when Sékou Abdul Kabri Cissé won with the help of his brother, a local *marabout*, whose gesture of replacing the fans in the Mosque with '*Djennenkés*' fans was met with widespread approval.

I would argue that the reasons for the riot and the subsequent destruction of property belonging to people one could term the 'heritage elite' in Djenné are tied up in perceptions of corruption and an elite continually benefiting from scarce heritage resources. The Imam in Djenné is accused in private of numerous counts of profiting from money brought to the Mosque in the town's name. Additionally the Cultural Mission continue to flout the '*Interdit aux non-Musulmans*' (forbidden to non-Muslims) sign on the outside of the Mosque, as well as having lost much of the trust they had fostered with *Djennenkés* during their early archaeological sensitisation work (Panella, 2002: 200) due to rumours of corruption. The tensions from the riot are still present, however in February 2008, delegates of the *Terra 2008* Getty Foundation Conference visiting Djenné were ushered into the Mosque by Cultural Mission representatives in front of many angry residents. Residual anger after the riot also led to the cancellation of Independence Day celebrations in September 2007 as they coincided with the anniversary of the riot. The failure to celebrate the Centenary of the Mosque in 2007 was also described by many *Djennenkés* as being due to residual tensions and fears of further violence.

There are many rumours of corruption constantly circulating in Djenné. In her ethnography of the building of the great library at Alexandria, Butler describes similar rumours as forming a 'critical chorus', a form of subversive 'echo' (Butler, 2007: 187). Heritage projects, like any other outside project bringing money to the town of Djenné are invariably subject to suspicion by those who seem themselves excluded

from their benefits. In his study of corruption in Africa, Olivier de Sardan (1999) identifies a 'corruption complex' a continuum that encompasses a great many corruption practices from minor *délits* such as bribing an official to government misappropriation of funds. He states:

Corruption in Africa today is embedded in collective norms, collective logics and collective identities, and that is the reason for its pervasiveness on a continental level, i.e. its regionalization. (1999: 248)

The commonalities found in all corruption in Africa are described by Olivier de Sardan as: 1) Routinization - corruption is commonplace and part of the ordinary functioning of African bureaucracies, 2) Stigmatization - despite seemingly accepting corruption, most Africans experience it as a calamity and attribute many of the current problems of African society to it) and 3) Lack of sanctions - people are protected by the social relationships that bind them. The embeddedness of corruption practices in Africa is located in cultural norms such as the act of gift giving (*'prix du kola'*⁶⁷) and the stranglehold solidarity networks have (such as age groups) on individuals who cannot operate outside of them.

The nature of corruption in Djenné cannot therefore be viewed as a local but instead a pan-African phenomenon. What is however specific about Djenné is that since the town's inclusion on the World Heritage List and the increased international attention paid to Djenné, some of the alleged corruption is operating within discourses of cultural heritage and identity, and therefore stirs up feelings of anger and resentment that sometimes even the social norms of solidarity networks cannot contain.

⁶⁷ Kola nuts are traditionally given as gifts to village elders when people visit them.

Djenné Patrimoine accuses the authorities in Djenné, in their attempts to preserve the town's cultural heritage, of preferring to access easily sourced foreign money rather than dealing with the reality of the living population. However, I would nuance this by arguing that 'cultural heritage' in Djenné is used as a symbol, by both donors and authorities in the town, of a legitimate need for help. Contrary to donations concerning economic development, health and education, heritage projects carry with them a perceived degree of dignity and autonomy that makes them especially attractive to foreign donors. The projects deal in measurable outcomes, they are time-bound and often only pay lip-service to the involvement of local populations. What the projects have so far failed to deal with is the reality of Djenné as an inhabited space. This 'blind spot' seems to be present in the discourses used by many people concerned with the protection of Djenné's architecture, as will be described in relation to the *Terra 2008* Earth Architecture conference.

Since the riot, efforts have been made to reconcile the population with the authorities, in part through the creation of a management committee of the Mosque in 2007. Despite their experiences during the riot, Adama (in his liaison role with the guides) and Lassina are both part of this management committee as are masons and representatives of the Cultural Mission and *Djenné Patrimoine*. To some extent, the authorities in Djenné such as the Cultural Mission, the Imam or the *Chef du Village* cannot be blamed if when seeking external funding for their projects, the projects come in a form not easily inclusive of local concerns. The reality is that Djenné is crying out for economic development, health and education projects. Djenné's cultural heritage could be preserved indirectly by helping people out of poverty and supporting their traditional livelihood strategies. Although not directly dealing with cultural heritage, newly created wealth would have a knock on effect, allowing people

to pay for the upkeep on their houses and stay in the town. People in Djenné need employment and opportunities for young people. These opportunities are in some measure created by the tourists, motivated by the cultural heritage, which is in turn supported by the heritage projects. However, this link is not made explicit to many people in Djenné who simply see the authorities profiteering from projects brought to the town in their name. As was the case for the housing restoration project, the key elements of trust, clarity in objectives, financial incentives and self-determination must be present in order to ensure local consent.

Whatever its failings, the Cultural Mission does have a difficult task in Djenné. In some cases, it has been powerless to stop material changes being made to the Mosque (e.g. fans paid for by the US Ambassador, the door at the front of the Mosque to prevent animals from entering). It has managed to dissuade the Imam from more radical changes to the building, such as the use of green tiles. The Cultural Mission maintains that no new dimensions should be added to classified monuments. However, these monuments are also homes or places of work or worship. A philosophy of preservation is in many ways at odds with an Islamist notion of the glorification of God through beautifying the Mosque.

Sometimes a choice between building in banco or cement in Djenné comes down to matters of practicality and health and safety. When a school was built on the site of Djenné's second Mosque, the Cultural Mission fought hard to have the building constructed entirely in banco. However, both teachers and parents firmly believed that the school should be built in cement as the authorities could not be counted upon to pay for the annual upkeep such a large banco building would require. Some parents had had the experience of part of the previous school collapsing around their

children, endangering their lives. In this instance, the teachers and parents won and the school was built in cement covered with fired clay tiles. Like the administrative buildings near the entrance of Djenné, on the outskirts of the town to the West, the hospital and radio stations are both cement structures for similar pragmatic reasons.

According to its staff, the Cultural Mission was praised by the Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in Paris who came to visit Djenné in 2005. As he only comes to Africa every fifteen years or so, Djenné was very lucky to welcome him. He is reported to have said that Djenné is the only 'original' town in the world, the only one that stays the same while living in the modern world. This may be the case for now, but at what price to its residents? Is it only a Western sensibility of nostalgic remembrance of the past that would consider a town forever staying materially the same as desirable?

The Cultural Mission argues that the only reason any money comes to Djenné in the first place is because of its World Heritage Status (although money does come from Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries because of the importance of Djenné as an Islamic centre). It is therefore crucial to protect Djenné's cultural heritage to ensure the future economic success of the town.

In Djenné, a new library was set up in 2007 by the Imam near the Mosque to house Djenné's *Tariqs* (Islamic manuscripts). However, to date only a small proportion of *Tariqs* have been handed over for safekeeping to the library. One of the Cultural Mission's staff explained that it was very hard to convince people to entrust them to a museum. This is in part due to distrust of the Imam and what are perceived as his financial motives for setting up the library, but also because there is as yet no money in place to preserve the documents, all of which are in a very fragile condition

(Figure 16). Additionally, the library is built in banco and two of its ceilings have already fallen in due to heavy rains (Figure 17A). Perhaps most tellingly, one of its outside walls has been covered in tiles to prevent rain damage (Figure 17B). To see the use of tiles in a building so near the Mosque is a new development in Djenné. The fact that the building itself is an Islamic library, and therefore sanctioned by the Imam, maybe even more so.

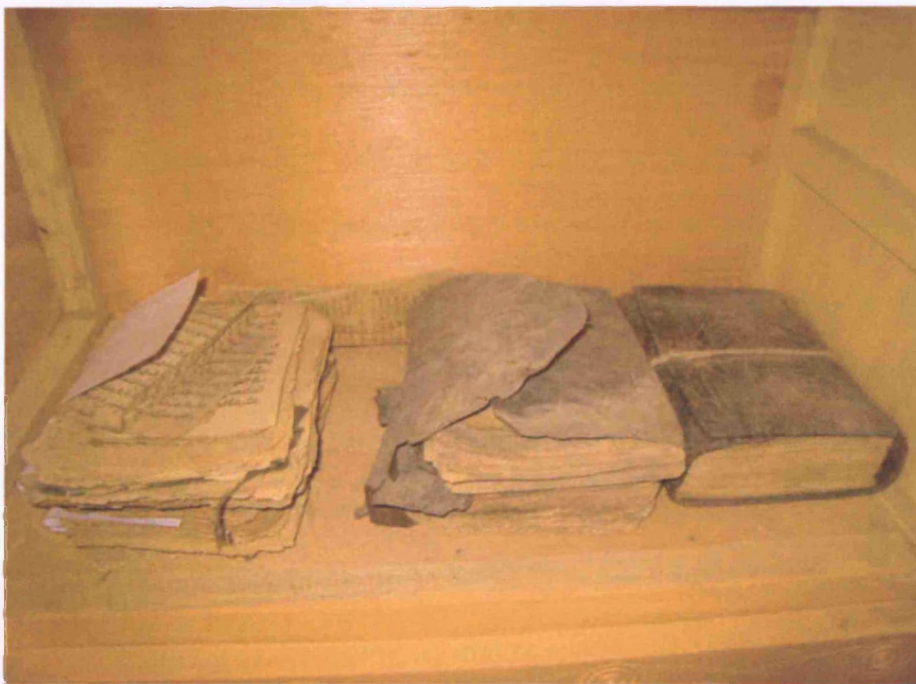


Figure 16. *Tariqs* in the new Islamic library in Djenné.

The *Tariqs* are in an extremely fragile condition and urgently need restoring.

In Timbuktu, a very successful museum and archiving project has been set up to scan, house and restore the manuscripts which are in many cases in a very fragile state (Brenner & Robinson, 1980). In Djenné, however, the Cultural Mission feels that is has more 'sensitisation' work ahead of it before people will be willing to part with their manuscripts. Rowlands (2005: 268) states that:

People do not identify with their culture but live it in the sense that the destruction of sacred sites and cultural patrimony is literally the death of the self. The need to keep one's 'culture' as property (in heritage centres, museums, private collections and 'sacred places') implies the power to do so is contingent on the capacity to maintain a unique cultural identity. This has wider implications in the sense that it connotes a value in cultural property that can only be realized through its successful transmission to future generations.

In Djenné, people may be maintaining their right to have a unique identity by resisting giving up their cultural goods to the 'archive'. Perhaps in part due to their experience of alienation from the archaeological sites around the town, local people do not trust the Cultural Mission or the Imam to be agents of transmission. 'Sensitisation' implies to some extent a pre-existing false consciousness or ignorance of the facts. In Djenné, many people feel that they are best placed to judge the importance of their own cultural heritage and are sceptical about, and often hostile to, people from outside the town defining cultural value for them. The 'death of the self' in Djenné may be giving up rights to your cultural heritage to a government institution staffed or funded by outsiders.



Figure 17A and 17B. Damage to the new Islamic library in Djenné.

When asked if people will still be living in banco houses in one hundred years time, staff at the Cultural Mission feel confident that the answer is yes. One of them expressed his certainty by stating that:

If a Djenné man makes money and he wants to show his wealth he will build a beautiful house with a *façade Toucouleur*, he will express himself in banco. He will be proud each year to re-mud his house. The maintenance of the front of the house is a symbol of wealth, people walking past can see if the house owner is rich or poor⁶⁸.

Perhaps the most fundamental problem for the Cultural Mission is that for the moment, most *Djennenkés* are very poor.

⁶⁸ Personal communication, August 2005

Terra 2008

The 10th International Earth Architecture Conference organised by the Getty Foundation was held in Bamako in February 2008. The conference brought together architects, archaeologists, heritage professionals, social scientists and conservators from all over the world. One of the opening addresses concentrated on the evolution of earth architecture as a discipline since the first *Terra* Conference in 1972.

As the conference was held in Bamako, Malian architecture was put centre stage. The future of Djenné's architecture was the subject of a number of presentations both from Malian heritage professionals and international scholars. The tensions found in Djenné between different heritage voices were replicated at the conference. Djenné was presented by the Dutch and the Cultural Mission through talks and an exhibition hosted at the National Museum. Masons were invited from Djenné to build façades of the Djenné houses in the museum gardens. In this instance, Djenné's domestic economy was explicitly tied to Mali's wider economy. During the conference, the National Museum in conjunction with Susan Vogel, an American film maker, and Trevor Marchand presented a film about Djenné entitled 'The Future of Mud' following the life of a young mason and exploring the tension between education and traditional apprenticeships. *Djenné Patrimoine* hosted an event at the *Centre Culturel Français* on the subject of Djenné's architecture with the help of French architects. Also present at the conference were employees from UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, the Imam's son, the Mayor and the ex-Director of the Cultural Mission in Djenné.

Each presentation (including my own poster presentation) on Djenné was a re-iteration of carefully rehearsed position on the future of Djenné's cultural heritage.

Notable in its absence was any discussion of the 2006 riot or the food and climatic difficulties faced by *Djennenkés* over the last few years. The overall message from the Malian heritage professionals was that earth architecture should not be seen to be a poor man's architecture, a point of view advocated by Western architects such as Bourgeois in the late 1980s (Bourgeois, 1989: 9):

This book is a celebration. It documents, discusses, and defends adobe architecture of the desert and savanna...It seeks to help relegitimize the entire architecture, under attack by the ideology of progress.

Present throughout the conference was what could be described as a 'romanticisation' of earth architecture, especially in the light of recent Western concerns over climate change and the need to find newer low impact technologies for the building trade. Although a lot of attention was paid to the expertise of the masons in reproducing and protecting Djenné's architecture, the limitations of the conference lay in its inability to engage with the lives of the people living within the buildings that were under discussion.

Of particular resonance to the concept of the external archive acting on Djenné was a presentation on the subject of a recently launched website named Aluka⁶⁹. On this site, African scholars and those with paid subscriptions around the world can access a large amount of information about Djenné such as a scanned version of Monteil's books, photos and perhaps most interestingly, a model of the whole of the Djenné Mosque. A new measuring technique using lasers allows the computer generation of an exact three dimensional plan of the Mosque, within one centimetre accuracy. The

⁶⁹ www.aluka.org

speaker reported that people in Djenné were suspicious when the measurements were taking place but were eventually convinced of the project's validity. The question therefore needs to be asked once again: who is the archive collecting information for? For what purpose? How much of a role should *Djennenkés* have in deciding what parts of their cultural heritage to give up to the archive? By what means is the average Djennenké going to have access to any of the information currently held on *Aluka*, now and in the future?

The Talo Dam

The Talo Dam on the Bani river is upstream from Djenné, south of Ségou (see Figure 1). The original impetus for UNESCO's 1970's World Heritage Convention came from the organisation's successful experience of protecting the *Abu Simbel* and Philae Temples from the threat posed by the Aswan Dam in 1959 (Magness-Gardiner, 2004). After appeals to UNESCO from the Egyptian and Sudanese governments, \$80 million was successfully raised on the international stage (half the money was donated from over fifty different countries) to dismantle and re-build on dry land the Pharaonic monuments. In Djenné, the threat from the upstream construction of the Talo Dam is similarly attracting international concern, in large part because of the town's World Heritage status. In this case, Djenné's archival presence is proving to be of benefit.

At the heart of the campaign to stop or alter the plans for the \$22 million Talo Dam is the international organization 'Cultural Survival'⁷⁰. In 2001, they commissioned a study by an expert team from the International Development Office at Clark University in Massachusetts, USA. The report concluded that the Talo Dam would be

⁷⁰ www.cs.org

harmful to the natural environment and would have a considerable impact on the populations living downstream, including residents of Djenné (due to a reduction in the surface area of the annual flooding). Very early on in the campaign, the importance of the Djenné Mosque as a protected World Heritage monument (and a powerful symbol for the campaign) was central to Cultural Survival's strategy. The case was made that the survival of the Mosque depended on adequate flooding to ensure an abundance of the mud needed to repair its walls each year. Responding to the Clark University report, the African Development Bank (the main funding body) temporarily stopped the construction of the Dam to allow for further consultation.

A journalist writing for National Geographic reported on the feelings in Djenné in June 2001:

Oumar Maiga, a Djennenké who heads the government's agricultural extension effort in the region, said he warned his bosses that the benefits the dam would bring to Talo would be offset by a drop in rice, meat, and fish production in Djenné. They responded by promising money for farmers to pump water from the Bani into their fields. "They are afraid," he said. "They know Djenné is a religious place." By that he meant a city whose leaders, in the ancient tradition of nyama, had supernatural powers. Then he shared a rumor: "The marabouts have already made a malédiction on the Talo dam," he said. "The person who lays the first stone will die." Later, in Bamako, as I sat in the office of Askia Muhamed, press secretary for President Alpha Oumar Konaré, the threat seemed faintly ridiculous. Muhamed said the national interest must override the local. "Mali cannot feed itself," he said. "The priority is development. One cannot stop development, even to save the country's heritage. (Lange, 2001)

In Djenné, the campaign against the Dam was supported by *Djenné Patrimoine* who commissioned their own report into the Dam's impact, and Jean-Louis Bourgeois who worked closely with Cultural Survival. Supplementary impact studies have led to a considerable change in the original design of the dam with the addition of sluice gates to regulate the flow of the water and the appointing of a management committee. There have also been discussions about building a second dam at Djenné. Despite residual worries and grave concerns about the proposal of a second dam, Cultural Survival agreed to the changes to the Talo Dam and signalled their consent for the project to go ahead.

During a visit to Djenné on the occasion of the official opening of the dam on the 13th February 2005, the Malian President Amadou Toumani Touré was welcomed with the usual music and bunting expected on such an occasion. However, in private, many *Djennenkés* still have very mixed feelings about the project. The long term impact of the Talo Dam remains to be seen, and in fact in 2007 Djenné had too much rather than too little water as it was hit by floods. Internally, in voicing their initial opposition to the project, *Djennenkés* drew on two powerful components of the identity of their town: the potency of the *marabouts* and Djenné's UNESCO World Heritage status. In this instance, Djenné had a double protection from outside harm and both parts of the town's identity were complementary. Externally, Djenné's powerful international image and the profile given to it by UNESCO undoubtedly had a direct bearing on the African Development Bank's decision to review its plans for the Dam. In this case, the archive lent legitimacy to fears over future harm and consequently protection.

Conclusion

The concept of archival knowledge is useful when talking about the practice of localising or institutionalising knowledge about Djenné. This type of knowledge has authority drawn from its claims of scientific rationality and is subject to ongoing scrutiny and revision. However, little input in this process comes from local actors in Djenné who have very little control over the representations of their lives and consequently, the projects brought to the town in their names. Elements 'hidden' within this form of archival knowledge about a place include nostalgic remembrance, idealized representations and narrow foci. The 'violence' of the archive is therefore what it leaves out, resists, overlooks or deliberately excludes.

The legitimacy of the archive comes from claims of accuracy and documentation. However, in Djenné the reality is one of hybrids and continual change. A second tension arises from an archival approach that aims to freeze knowledge in time clashing with a local ideology of development and economic imperatives.

Phillips states that 'genuine' tradition is involuntary and unconscious, and identifies a false opposition between tradition and modernity:

Once this false opposition is set aside and the problem of tradition ceases to be defined as a resistance to modernity, tradition becomes again a means of raising essential questions about the ways in which we pass on the life of cultures - questions that necessarily include issues of authority as well as invention, practice as well as interpretation. (Phillips, 2004: 25)

An emphasis on transmission rather than protection could lead to a very different approach to the management of cultural heritage in Djenné. In the next chapter, it is

this transmission that will be explored through describing the embodied practice of the artisans. For them, transmission is a means of passing on a particular form of subsistence activity and only occasionally depends on outside archival or documented knowledge. This form of cultural transmission is also necessarily dynamic and relies on adaptation and change to maintain its continued relevance to subsequent generations of artisans.

5 Artisans, embodied knowledge and authenticity

The artisans in Djenné specialise in the production of many of the textiles, jewellery and leather products found throughout Mali. In fact, at first glance, there is nothing particularly 'Djennenké' for tourists' consumption, despite calls by *Djenné Patrimoine* for artisans to return to the basic crafts of the town (namely embroidery and leatherwork). Djenné, like other places in the Mopti region, most famously San, is well known for its production of *bogolan* (mud cloth). The production of pottery is also widespread (La Violette, 2000). The restrictions of technology in Djenné, such as the lack of a machine to mechanically produce flat sheets or long strands of silver, does mean that the production of jewellery in Djenné is done entirely by hand, unlike other centres of production such as Mopti or Bamako. Djenné is famous for embroidery yet embroiderers in the town, no longer able to compete with mechanically produced material, have long since had to orientate their craft towards tourist consumption and rich Malian officials. Instead of being portable forms of wealth, *grands boubous* (traditional long robes worn by both men and women) are now becoming artefacts that are making their way into museums, or are being worn by Malian politicians on special occasions.

In this chapter, I will explore how the artisans in Djenné are negotiating their own authenticity while seeking to diversify their production for an ever changing tourist market. A strong theme that emerges is that the authentic production of crafts in Djenné combines not only the embodied knowledge of the artisan, but is also negotiated through the choice of materials used for production. Innovation in

production is constant and strongly encouraged within a sometimes contradictory framework of success and failure. The artisans in Djenné are first and foremost shrewd businessmen and women who see the outside world as a potential market for their products. Unfortunately, access to these new markets is very hard to negotiate and predict and the creation of long term trade relationships very rare.

As will be argued throughout this chapter, the embodied knowledge of the artisans allows their work to remain 'authentic' while constantly changing. This knowledge is conceived of by UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage. As opposed to the archival knowledge discussed in the previous chapter, or the historical knowledge discussed in the next, embodied knowledge is firmly located within Djenné, the artisans and their families. The embodied knowledge of the artisans is similar to the knowledge of the masons who find themselves at the centre of UNESCO's project in Djenné (Marchand, 2006). Unlike the masons, the artisans are constantly having to adapt to an external tourist market. However, a discussion of the negotiation of authenticity through practice is relevant to the work of the masons who are also having to adapt to new economic realities and international interest while maintaining their integrity as masons.

Being an embroiderer's apprentice

While the history of Djenné embroiders remains little documented (Gardi *et al.*, 1995) it is still possible to learn the art of embroidery in Djenné today. A detailed descriptions of the techniques and styles of embroidery found in Djenné can be found in a book entitled '*Djenné d'Hier à Demain*' edited by Brunet-Jailly (Brunet-Jailly, 1999), the founder of *Djenné Patrimoine*. The descriptions include the cataloguing of

the Songhay names and photographs of each stitch as well as the different kinds of traditional garments produced.

My relationship with Ousmane, a famous Djenné embroiderer, lasted throughout my time there. Ousmane is an elderly man and works in a small *atelier* with one of his sons and a jeweller, named Alpha Sidiki Touré. When I first arrived in Djenné, the *atelier* was situated down a side street that links the main market square to the other main road in Djenné that runs down past the school to join the main road leaving Djenné. It was strategically placed very near ‘*Chez Baba*’ a hotel and restaurant popular with back-packers in Djenné. The *atelier* was flanked by a tailor’s shop on one side and a grocer/hardware shop on the other. The two metal doors opening on to the street were draped with *bogolan* and embroidered cloth for sale within the *atelier*. Ousmane worked sitting on the floor on a mat within the *atelier*, with a view straight onto the road outside that allowed him to greet friends and acquaintances passing by. Opposite him, and separated by a glass cabinet displaying his wares, sat Alpha, the jeweller. He also sat on a mat, surrounded by the things he needed to make his jewellery, tools I learnt later had been passed on to him by his father. At the back of the *atelier* sat another man who worked on a sewing machine, as well as Ousmane’s son. A radio was on all day long, tuned into the local radio station, combining news and music.

Ousmane had had experience of teaching a Western woman once before, when a Belgian artist had spent some time with him. I was quickly accepted into the workshop and from my daily attendance developed a friendship with Alpha, the jeweller. Alpha, being younger than Ousmane and speaking better French, was able to talk to me far more openly about life in Djenné and later, through our involvement

together in the Djenné Festival, became a good friend. Unlike most people in Djenné, he spoke to me openly about politics which other people were more circumspect about. This was partly due to his keen interest in politics and international affairs and his frequent questioning of the state of politics in the UK and the comparisons he drew with Mali.

In order to pay my way with Ousmane, I commissioned an embroidered bedspread for a friend's wedding from him costing 100,000 CFA (£100). This represented approximately six weeks work during which time I would sit by his side every morning and learn some basic stitches. It was agreed that I would embroider a circular design on a small piece of cloth, a component 'patch' which is then sewn on to strips of cloth, sewn together to make the bedspread or some of the other embroidered products. The component patches come in a variety of different designs, ranging from the simple to the very complex and can also be embroidered in one of two colours: cream or gold coloured thread. I was to attempt the simplest patch with cream coloured thread.

On the first day I learnt the first and most basic stitch, named *dioré* (Brunet-Jailly, 1999: 99) although I was never taught the names of the stitches by Ousmane himself. He sat me down on a mat next to his and on a wooden board placed the bit of white cotton material on which he drew the pattern with pencil tracing round small and large Nescafé tins. Ousmane owns a collection of designs drawn in pencil on paper and kept in a water-proof file. He can refer to these when discussing designs with apprentices or clients, as well as referring to the photos in *Djenné D'Hier à Demain*, a copy of which he keeps by his side. Creating a catalogue (archive) of the products for sale in the shop was a priority for both Ousmane and Alpha and I helped them do so

by photographing the products and saving the images digitally for them. They could then retrieve, send or print the images at a later date.



Figure 18. Embroidery in Djenné

A number of cushion covers are shown here, demonstrating the different uses of thread to 'draw' patterns or create a complex 'colouring in' effect (top left).

Ousmane showed me how to stitch and hold the material for the patch properly. It is important to hold the material in one hand with the fingers splayed to stretch the fabric as if a canvas. This is harder than it looks and takes some weeks of practice to do with ease. The stitch was shown to me a few times and then the material handed over for me to continue. After a few of my own stitches, Ousmane inspected my work and allowed me to continue. From the outset, I was made to understand that the small piece of material, the cotton I would use to embroider and the needle were all valuable and would be costly to replace. There was no assumption that being new to embroidery, I would need several attempts and scrap pieces of material. In fact, when I made a mistake with a stitch a few days later (they were too far apart), Ousmane

showed me how to unpick the stitches with a razor blade and start again. Over the weeks, I learnt further stitches, each a little harder to learn than the precedent. The stitches are used to 'colour in' the different parts of the patch creating different patterns and textures (figure 18). One stitch involved the making a small hole in the cloth with a sharpened feather and sewing round the outside to create a focus for the pattern.

Ousmane was unfailingly patient in his teaching; he is used to having apprentices and regularly out-sources pieces of work to the apprentices who have 'graduated' from his tuition or to other embroiders in the town, for example, he may commission a pocket for a *grand boubou*, or *tilbi* (see Gardi *et al.*, 1995). He sketches out the designs and tacks the material together and then it is delivered to the person, sometimes in an outlying village, who has a couple of weeks to complete it and return it to the atelier.

Ousmane was always coming up with new ideas for products to sell to tourists. As well as the traditional *grands boubous* for sale in his *atelier*, there were bedspreads, cushion covers, small handbags and his newest innovation, a lampshade. The frame of the lampshade was made of wood and metal and the embroidered material stretched over it and held in place with a cream coloured zip. Unlike the bedspread, the lampshade was not made of material with component patches; instead the embroidery was stitched directly on to the material. This had the effect of creating a projected design when the lamp was turned on. One of his lamps was permanently on in the shop and some others had been given to local hotels to place in rooms as advertisements for his work. The handbags were best sellers with tourists as they were economically accessible, costing between 5,000 CFA (£5) and 8,000 CFA (£8) depending on how many were bought and the negotiating skills of the tourist or their

guide. The bags are made of cotton strips sewn together with only one embroidered 'patch' on the front. The embroidery is the labour intensive part of making the bag so by just including one 'patch', bags could be made fairly rapidly. The handle of the bag was a piece of rope sewn into place, and the closing was a handmade 'button'. The cotton strips were sometimes dyed blue so the bags could also be produced in a variety of styles and colours. The cushion covers also sold well and retailed at around 15,000 CFA (£15). They either had embroidery sewn straight onto the material, like the lamps, or they were made of plain cotton with patches.

Ousmane's newest idea was to make belts for the tourist market. One morning I took in some photos taken from an old copy of *Marie Claire* magazine to show him some of the fastenings I had been trying to describe in conversation. Although he was open to trying different things, he only contemplated using traditional materials, for example the little sewn buttons and not metal fastenings, when thinking about a design for the belt. It seems that the reason was a combination of tradition and practicality. If he could not make the fastenings himself, then he would have to buy them or outsource them and it could very rapidly become too expensive. He also explained that a metal fastening would not be authentic and not in keeping with the Djenné embroidery style. This came as a surprise to me as not only was he contemplating making belts but also new designs for ties, two products that are not traditionally found in Djenné. Therefore authenticity did not reside in the product itself but instead in its means of production and the choice of materials used. Embroidery was a technique that could be applied to any number of products to make them Djennenké.

As I worked in the atelier every morning, I came to get to know the stream of daily visitors, mostly elderly men who came to give their encouragement and greetings.

Many of them inspected my work and some of them sat for a long time on the bench just inside the shop and discussed the day's events with Ousmane and Alpha. Tourists coming to the *atelier* were also very interested to talk to me about my apprenticeship and I sometimes helped to translate from English into French for them.

Ousmane has been an embroiderer since he was seven years old and has never entertained the idea of a different life. He learnt his work from his father and has passed on his knowledge to his sons. Unlike most people in Djenné, Ousmane has travelled extensively. Together with some of the Djenné masons and other artisans, he was invited to the *Folklife Festival* in Washington in 1995. He had also travelled to Brussels to a trade fair and was preparing another such trip during my time of being an apprentice as well as participating in the twin town exchange between Djenné and Vitré in France. On the floor by his side, Ousmane keeps an album in which he collects photographs from his travels, as well as photographs of him with tourists and visitors who he has befriended in Djenné. His skill as an embroiderer has allowed him to travel and make business contacts throughout the world. This, in some ways seemed to have changed his view of Djenné. For example, he was very struck that in Europe and America animals were far more controlled than in Djenné (where they are often left to wander freely in the streets) and this observation had led him to fence in his own animals. He was also struck by the high rise building in the United States and the sheer scale on which food was available during his stay. His visits abroad had not though fundamentally altered his way of living in Djenné or his appreciation of his home town. Like other people who had travelled abroad and returned, his view was that compared to Djenné many places are cold, big, anonymous and overwhelming.

Despite his international business contacts and fairly regular income from commissioned work as well as passing trade, Ousmane, like most people in Djenné, was often short of money. For example, when he wanted to send his son to Ségou to take part in the *Biennale* (described below) he asked me for an advance of 20,000 CFA (£20) to fund the trip. This came as somewhat of a surprise as I knew that he had recently received an order from a French woman for a *grand boubou* at the cost of 500,000 CFA (£500). It seems therefore that for even the most successful artisans in Djenné, cash flow is a problem. A possible explanation is that being responsible for a large family he may have had many demands on his income. As I found out, money in Djenné is in constant movement and it is only yours for as long as you can keep hold of it. Once a social relationship is established between two people, the borrowing and lending of money is a very regular occurrence. This is true within professional groups, such as the guides (described in Chapter 6) but most particularly within families.

Many people described the difficulty of accumulating wealth as capital for future projects. For example, young men often had to sacrifice their small savings in order to help an older male relative to do the *Hadj* (travel to Mecca). The only way to save money is to somehow take it out of circulation but this is difficult to achieve as even people travelling to the nearby town of Mopti to use a bank were rarely able to confer an 'out of bounds' status on their money, with the exception of money earmarked for specific projects. Like money, material goods also seemed to be in constant circulation unless explicitly placed out of bounds, as I found out when my room became the sometime depository for electronic goods, personal belongings and occasionally money.

Artisan associations

The artisans in Djenné have organised themselves into an association since 1995. Each sub-group of artisans (tailors, carpenters, jewellers, leatherworkers...) pay 15,000 CFA (£15) a year to be a part of the association. Each sub-group also have their own 'industry' associations. Alpha told me about the Jeweller's Association, set up in 1998 with the aim of developing the work of jewellers in Djenné. The long term aim of the association is to forge links with other jewellers' associations in Mali and they are currently exploring the idea of involving a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) to help them identify a source of funding for the purchase of a machine that mechanically produces metal sheets and wire (the cost of the machine is approximately 8 million CFA/£8000). In Mopti, the jewellers have acquired two such machines and own them communally, paying a small fee every time they use them (5 CFA/£0.005 for each gram of metal). In 2006, however, there was only one way of making jewellery in Djenné and that was with a hammer and an anvil.

The limitations of the technology in Djenné mean that the jewellers must limit their designs to those that are viable using traditional methods. One such design is the ubiquitous 'Peul earring' found in all the jewellers' shops in Djenné and a regular export product for Alpha. The size and weight of the earrings can vary from approximately five to twenty grams. The Peul earring is very hard to make as the metal must be hammered into a conical shape (see photo) and consequently some apprentices never master the technique. Despite this, Alpha was happy to show me the steps necessary for its production, as he explained: "It's not a secret, just a job".⁷¹

⁷¹ "Ce n'est pas un secret, juste un travail."

The work of being a jeweller in Djenné, like that of embroidery, is learnt through a system of apprenticeship, usually drawn from the family circle. There are five main families of jewellers in Djenné, two of them are separate branches of the same family. Despite spending the majority of his time in the *atelier* shared with Ousmane, Alpha has his own workshop adjacent to his house in which he employs a dozen or so young men, mostly relatives. Over time, the young men learn the skills necessary to judge the quality of metal (using a special acid and a control stone), melt it down and fashion it into the component shapes necessary for jewellery making.

At first their jobs are quite basic, such as stoking the fire and learning to use the bellows, made of animal skin. Most apprenticeships will start around the age of seven, although the children will usually have been exposed to the jewellery making all their lives. It is important when children first become apprentices for them to learn the dangers of the job and so they are warned off harshly if they attempt to tamper with the fires. Next, they are taught the skill hammering out metal into sheets. This is taught with bronze or copper as silver is too valuable to waste on the potential mistakes made by the apprentices. Gradually, and depending on their individual competence, the apprentices will learn all the skills they need to make jewellery, usually making their first ring or small Peul nose ring around the age of ten (these are often made of bronze and sold to local women for as little as 100 CFA/£0.10).

Once an apprentice has mastered the necessary skills to become a jeweller he will work in the workshop fulfilling orders. Jewellers are not paid a salary but instead paid per piece of jewellery produced. For example, if a pair of earrings is sold at 5,000 CFA (£5), the artisan will be paid 1000 CFA (£1) as it will cost 2500 CFA (£2.50) to buy the silver and another couple of hundred for cleaning products, charcoals for the burners

etc. At times when there are no orders, the jewellers are free to use the workshop in a self-employed manner and innovate to create new designs. If these new products appeal to Alpha, he will buy them and sell them in his shop. If the new design is popular, more orders will follow.

As a result, there is constant innovation in the jewellery found in Djenné, with the limiting factor of the technology available and the difficulty in finding certain materials. Precious and semi-precious stones and materials available in other parts of Mali (e.g. rubies, ivory) are rarely found in Djenné so the jewellery makers limit themselves to gold, silver and amber. In 2005, twenty-four carat gold cost 8000 CFA (£8) per gram of un-worked metal and 10,000 CFA (£10) per gram of worked gold (already in some jewellery form). Eighteen carat gold was less expensive at 7500 CFA (£7.50) per gram. As well as the design and difficulty in making a piece of jewellery, its weight is therefore integral to its final value. In fact, when bargaining over the price of a piece of jewellery, Alpha would often resort to putting it on the little weighing scales in front of the customer to assure them of its value. A ring will usually weigh four or five grams and is consequently a very costly item when made out of gold. Silver on the other hand is a much cheaper raw material, costing 1750 CFA (£1.75) per gram (approximately four times cheaper than gold). Alpha regularly goes to Bamako to buy silver and comes back with large quantities at a time. Sometimes, semi-precious stone and amber can be sourced from old women who come into Djenné to sell their

jewellery. Gold can occasionally be bought in Djenné or from ateliers in Bamako who buy it directly from source as Mali is a gold mining country⁷².

Negotiating authenticity

Alpha describes inspiration for his work as coming from personal experience. This can be from seeing women on television or in the street when certain patterns or designs lodge themselves in your memory. When the time comes for making new jewellery, the inspiration will be recalled first as a drawing on paper and then through translating it into a prototype:

Alpha was working on a leaf design necklace. He makes the templates out of old phone cards. He showed me his equipment – a locally made hammer that he puts in water before he uses it so that the wood swells and the metal head doesn't fly off. He also uses a locally made anvil (piece of metal wedged into a piece of wood). The little scales he uses he bought for 50,000 CFA from Bamako second hand. They are a very expensive but indispensable piece of equipment.⁷³

If the prototype can be sold successfully, then more will be made. In his experience, very few new designs fail. When asked about keeping the tradition of jewellery alive in Djenné, Alpha does not see a contradiction between innovation and tradition. However, some of the jewellers in Djenné locate traditions in the technology and reject newer technologies such as welding, preferring only the old techniques of hammering and twisting.

⁷² See Africa Research Bulletin (17235), Dec 1st 2006 - Jan 15th 2007, Blackwell Publishing Ltd for an announcement on a new gold mining venture in Mali in conjunction with an Australian company.

⁷³ Research Diary entry, Wednesday 14th August 2005.

Although the raw materials used to make jewellery are important for determining their final financial value, their provenance is not important to confer authenticity on the object. For example, a key component used by Alpha in his jewellery are old French ten franc pieces from the 1960s (costing 7500 CFA/ £7.50 each) that are melted down and mixed with pure silver (which is very soft) to make bracelets. This recycling is not referenced in the final product. Similarly, old (some would say antique) amber beads or silver bracelets are melted down or recycled to make new products. One particular jeweller in Djenné who specialises in buying old bracelets will take a photograph of them before melting them down and then re-use the captured designs, or part of them, on his newer, lighter jewellery.

Authenticity in the materiality of the objects therefore does not seem to be a concern for jewellers in Djenné as the provenance of the raw material is of little interest or note. Jewellery is Djennenké through being made in Djenné by jewellers who usually belong to one of the five big jeweller families in the town. A debate sometimes arises about the technology that should or not be employed but it does not seem that the jewellers are capitalising financially with tourists on the uniqueness of their products or techniques used to make them. This being the case, their production is not tied to a particular technology and they are free to seek funding to buy labour saving machines.

Both Alpha and Ousmane calculate the financial value of the products they sell through a combination of the cost of raw materials, the amount of labour and the different degrees of specialist skill they represent. However, unlike jewellery, the 'technology' of embroidery (*broderie à la main*) is central to the value of Ousmane's work and distinguishes it from machine produced products that can be bought much

more cheaply. These methods of calculating value are only two of a number of ways found in Djenné, others, such as Hama the leatherworker, calculates the value of his *gris-gris* (amulets) based on their potency.

Hama is a leatherworker (*cordonnier*) who sits with other leatherworkers in the corner of the women's daily market. There are four main leatherworker families in Djenné all specialising in different things: bags, belts, shoes and *gris-gris*. Hama says his family specialises in shoes although I often saw him making *gris-gris*. The presence of the leatherworkers in such an accessible part of town allows for a lively traffic of customers, many needing minor repairs to shoes or bags. Hama has an apprentice who sits by his side and at the time of our interview, was busy working on a large order of simple leather sandals. Hama on the other hand, was working on the production of a *gris-gris*, a type of amulet bought by people to protect themselves or their belongings from malevolent forces.

A *gris-gris* can cost anything from 2000 CFA (£2) to 50,000 CFA (£50) depending on what it is being used to protect against. For example, a *gris-gris* that protects from gunshot wounds fetches a very high price, while one used to maintain the privacy of personal belongings, or to cure headaches, would cost a lot less. *Gris-gris* designs vary but at their most basic they are made from a piece of paper on which a *marabout* has written out a part of the Koran⁷⁴, this is then rolled up in material and sewn into a leather band or pouch. If the customer is not in possession of a piece of Koranic writing, Hama can copy out part of the Koran himself from a template. The encasing

⁷⁴ See Mommersteeg, G. (2000) 'Le Domaine du Marabout: maitres coraniques et specialistes magico-religieux a Djenne, Mali', *Djenne Patrimoine* Numero 8. for a discussion of the practices of the *marabout* when preparing Koranic writings to be used in *gris-gris*. Factors include auspicious dates on which to write the inscription, the use of incense, and the placing of copies of the inscriptions in powerful places.

leather is then scored with designs using the blunt side of a knife and coated with a black permanent stain. It is then threaded onto a leather thong, sometimes with small beads either sides and worn around the neck, on the arm, around the waist or placed with precious possessions.

In order to understand more about his work, I asked Hama if I could commission a *gris-gris* from him and film him while he made it. He was happy to comply and we decided I would buy a cheap *gris-gris* from him, costing 2000 CFA (£2). Not being a Muslim, the difficulty of the potency of the *gris-gris* was overcome by Hama, who suggested using a blank piece of paper instead of a piece of Koranic writing. I could then safely own the *gris-gris*. As an outsider, a striking part of Hama's work was the ease and openness of the environment within which the *gris-gris* are produced, as several people came over with requests while I was filming the production of my order. There did not seem to be the need for privacy for either client or leatherworker, even if the requests were sometimes personal in nature, relating to ailments or private difficulties.

While the shoes, belts and bags sold by Hama have a value based on the amount of leather used, the labour involved and the complexity of the design, the value of the *gris-gris*, while also in part subject to such judgements, is more closely linked to its future use, and hence its potency. The *gris-gris* made in Djenné are particularly valued as Djenné has a reputation throughout Mali as a '*marabout town*'. The *marabouts* in Djenné are at once feared and revered. In fact, as described in Chapter 3, some of the *marabouts* in Djenné derive their income from rich businessmen outside Djenné who pay them to pray for the success of their business in a kind of live embodiment of a *gris-gris*.

Embodied knowledge

Understanding the mechanism by which embodied knowledge is transferred from one artisan to the next is a priority for bodies like UNESCO who are currently developing their work with intangible heritage. Marchand (2003) discusses this mechanism in reference to his work in the Yemen. He explains how after the inclusion of the city of Sana'a in the Yemen on UNESCO's World Heritage List, several Western trained architects promoted the idea of establishing officially regulated trade schools to protect the town's architecture, thus replacing the competitive families of traditional builders in the city. This was meant not only to secure the survival of the Sana'ani style of architecture but also to impose a form of 'quality control'. However, Marchand argued that:

Trade schools, which would aim to revive or sustain traditional craft production and building techniques, might successfully train corps of craftspeople to reproduce accurately the material products in question, *but the traditional building trade, defined by its distinctive set of human relations and methods for transferring knowledge, cannot easily be replicated.*" (2003: 35, original emphasis)

He concludes that a different focus should be adopted when thinking about cultural continuity:

Ultimately, 'tradition' lies in the process and qualitative aspect of the human relations, not in the materiality of the object (2003: 35)

Consequently, in common with the work of other artisans in Djenné, the work of the Djenné's masons, the *barey-ton*, can be seen to be both an embodied and a social practice. Additionally, it would be hard to disembed and capture the masons'

knowledge to ensure its transmission (through for example, a trade school or archival records).

Marchand (2006: 51) concludes that in order to ensure the survival of Djenné's architecture, the social cohesion of *barey-ton* is paramount:

I will ultimately assert that the maintenance of an apprenticeship system that endows young men with not only technical skills but a sense of social identity and professional responsibility is the most effective way to guarantee a sustainable reproduction of a distinct architecture and an urban landscape imbued with changing and dynamic meaning for the Djennenké population.

He therefore puts the masons at the centre of any future plan to protect Djenné's architecture. This position echoes the work UNESCO is now undertaking with intangible cultural heritage, where transmission, identity and continuity are taking precedence over 'outstanding universal value'. However, it is hard to see how in practice an accommodation could be reached between the dominant 'archival' knowledge of the town and a more dynamic embodied one.

To some extent, the Dutch housing restoration project did achieve such an accommodation through positioning Djenné's masons at the heart of the project. However, the 'authenticity debate' surrounding the project (choice of houses to restore, documentation and historical analyses) took place to a large extent outside Djenné and involved 'experts' from Dutch Universities. As was stated in the previous chapter, the locus of authenticity in Djenné was seen as residing in the façades of the houses, and these were considered authentic because they closely resembled early photographs of Djenné.

UNESCO states that no material changes can be made to Djenné as a 'monument' without endangering its World Heritage status. The archival approach to Djenné is therefore resistant to change and unwilling to give up its power to local negotiations of authenticity. A knowledge monopoly is in force, where local voices find themselves drowned out by archival imaginings:

In short, it would seem that the practice of prioritizing the material by (largely) Western trained specialists is vested with (potentially neoimperialist) ambitions to monopolize what has been constructed as a tangible resource. Cultures are effectively reduced to, and constrained by, a positivist discourse that reconfigures cultural resources as classifiable and quantifiable objects.
(Marchand 2001: 138)

Unlike other artisans in Djenné, the masons find themselves part of an ongoing debate about authenticity and cultural continuity. Whereas the jewellers are free to change their design and 'improve' their products for new markets, the use of tiles by the masons is condemned by UNESCO. A Western focus on the town's architecture has no doubt increased the status of the town's masons and their income. However, more importantly, the masons are bound by their responsibility to Djenné's residents. They cannot solely bear the burden of negotiating between the desire of the residents and the restrictions of the officials in the town (such as the Cultural Mission), as a debate about authenticity and architecture in Djenné should include the whole of the town. Therefore, just as the archive (in the form of early writings, photographs, colonial exhibitions...) should not be considered a unique source of knowledge about the town, nor can the embodied practice of its masons. Instead, houses in Djenné should first and foremost be thought of as people's homes, places of shelter, comfort and pride for their inhabitants.

Voices of authenticity in Djenné

There does not seem to be any ‘authenticity anxiety’ amongst the artisans in Djenné. Instead, it seems that authenticity in terms of cultural production resides within the embodied knowledge achieved through kinship and apprenticeship. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 7 in relation to the Artisan Hall during the *Festival du Djennéry*, some organisations in Djenné such as *Djenné Patrimoine* and the Cultural Mission are becoming increasingly concerned that Djenné is losing its unique cultural appeal.

In 1999, *Djenné Patrimoine* drew up an inventory of typical *artisanat* made in Djenné. The Association’s position is that being unique to Djenné, these objects should be protected through sensitising artisans to the needs of the tourists (who it is assumed are seeking authentically *Djennenké* objects). These objects, that include locally produced *bogolan*, leather goods such as boots, jewellery, beadwork and embroidery, are contrasted with the masks, Dogon statues, Tuareg jewellery and imported cloth also found for sale in Djenné. During the *Festival du Djennéry*, this issue took on particular importance as many of the objects on sale in the artisan’s hall were not made in Djenné.

Additionally, some artisans in Djenné are involved in the production of *faux* terracotta statues, mostly on sale in the shops operated by the guides. Most of these objects are clearly recent reproductions or ‘fakes’ and a tourist purchasing them would not be under the illusion that they were buying an ancient object. However, other *antiquaires* in the town blur the line between what is a reproduction terracotta object and one acquired from the archaeological sites surrounding the town. Despite very strong sensitisation programmes warning against the purchase of archaeological

objects, tourists may be sold a fake in the hope that they are buying an authentic archaeological object. In relation to archaeological objects therefore, people in Djenné are aware that there is a desire for authenticity and some *antiquaires* will go as far as artificially ageing objects to give them the required patina desired by tourists.

Biennale de Ségou

The event now known as *Biennale Artistique et Culturelle* was first started by Mobido Keita after Independence in 1960. During Keita's era, they were annual events called *Les Semaines de la Jeunesse* (1963-68). Their antecedents had been the *1er Festival Africain de la Jeunesse* in 1958 and the *1er Festival Nationale de la Jeunesse* in 1962 (Arnoldi, 2006). Speaking of *Les Semaines de la Jeunesse*, Arnoldi (2006: 58) states that:

Many local performance genres were ethnically or regionally based, and their insertion into a national cultural pantheon was intended to allow citizens at large, regardless of their specific affiliations, to identify with and embrace these arts as wholly Malian.

After having being suspended for a period of 12 years between 1989-2003 (although in 2001 there was a *Semaine Nationale des Arts et de la Culture*), *Biennales* were re-launched in 2003 by President Amadou Toumani Touré. During the opening ceremony the ex Minister of Culture⁷⁵, Cheick Oumar Sissoko said:

The *Biennale* will never be again as it was before. It will now rest on four considerations around which the Ministry of Culture is actively working and mobilizing its resources. 1 - Culture as a factor in economic development; 2 -

⁷⁵The new Minister of Culture in Mali is named Mohamed Al Moctar (2008).

culture as a factor in the stability of the country; 3 - culture as a factor in the preservation of cultural expressions; 4 - and culture as factor in developing fertile partnerships⁷⁶. (my translation)

In 2005, the Cultural Mission, some artisans and masons from Djenné formed a delegation who took part in the *Biennale de Ségou*. Ségou was chosen as suitable location by the Government in order to support its policy of decentralisation. The Djenné delegation were representatives of the 'Région de Mopti' and chose architecture as the theme for their exhibition. Each *région* had an exhibition space in which to showcase their cultural heritage. The exhibitions tended to refer to the production of *artisanat* and in that way, Djenné's entry with its emphasis on architecture was therefore unique. It also benefited from having a multi-media dimension to it (in the form of a projected slide show) and a number of model houses and exhibits donated by the Dutch. The exhibitions were judged by a committee of experts and a prize of 1 million CFA (£1,000) awarded to the best entry.

Despite the financial awards available, the Mopti delegation did have some difficulty in motivating people from Djenné to attend the *Biennale* as there is no assured financial reward. In fact, to their disappointment, the *Région de Mopti* delegation's exhibition came second in 2005 to the *Région de Gao*. As it turned out, the artisans in Djenné had also been well advised to think about attending the *Biennale* as the sale of *artisanat* to tourists was very disappointing. Ousmane's son, despite spending three days in the space set aside for artisans made only a handful of sales due to a lack of

⁷⁶ « La Biennale ne sera jamais plus comme avant. Elle va reposer désormais sur quatre considérations autour desquelles le Ministère de la Culture se mobilise et travaille activement : 1 – la culture comme facteur de développement économique; 2 – la culture comme facteur de stabilité du pays ; 3 – la culture comme facteur de la préservation des expressions culturelles ; 4 – et la culture comme facteur de développement d'un partenariat fécond. ». For full speech transcript see <http://www.maliculture.net>

tourists participating in the event. However his presence at the *Biennale* was an important part of his apprenticeship and an important way of gaining more experience and responsibility.

Conclusion

A discussion of the work of artisans in Djenné demonstrates that authenticity, while being of utmost importance both externally, to organisations such as UNESCO and internally, to the Cultural Mission and *Djenné Patrimoine*, is in fact of little immediate concern for the artisans themselves. This is because the artisans are the locus of their own authenticity and they pass on their cultural knowledge through embodied practice in the form of apprenticeships. Architecture, embroidery and the production of jewellery in Djenné is Djennenké because it is made by local people trained in a local tradition. In this context, change is part of the adaptation of the tradition to new economic, political, religious and social realities. Through its work protecting intangible heritage, UNESCO has recognised the dynamic of cultural transmission through embodied knowledge. In Djenné itself, UNESCO and the Cultural Mission recognise the irreplaceable role of the masons for the ongoing preservation of Djenné's architecture. However, at the same time, a re-evaluation of UNESCO's original vision of Djenné as a monument (World Heritage) needs to occur to allow space for the cultural life of Djenné to continue evolving. This evolution need not be conceptualised as posing a threat to Djenné's architecture but instead should be seen as breathing a vital life force into the town.

6 Guides and the regulation of history in Djenné

In this chapter I will describe how tourism in Djenné is becoming increasingly regulated in an attempt by the Malian government to standardise the industry. The introduction of tests for guides across Mali has marked a move towards a stable history of the country as the knowledge of the guides is assessed against a national norm. By discussing the life histories of two guides, the complex place the guides inhabit within Djenné is revealed: they are at once socially marginalised and a very important part of the town's economy. Most guides in Djenné will not have attended school for many years and will therefore have bypassed the historical education that is part of the Mali's national curriculum. Their knowledge is therefore a pastiche of oral history, information from guide books (for those who are literate) and information from tourists themselves. While the guides are now being judged against the new criteria set out by the guide test, interviews with tourists reveal that what they seek from guides during their time in Djenné are often personal insights that make them feel they have a degree of emotional complicity with their hosts.

Djenné's History

According to Adame Ba Konaré (2000: 17) Malian history is inextricably linked to the country's colonial experience:

Malian historiography, indeed African historiography cannot be understood outside the colonial domination from which it came and in relation to which it is defined. French colonialism, in approaching the history of African people,

had as its principle objective to transform the barbarous and bloody past Africans to the current benevolence.

Konaré goes on to explain that after Independence in 1960, the government launched a programme of pedagogical reform to re-habilitate the heroes of the pre-colonial state. History therefore became a nationalistic project 'a narrative without objectivity' (Konaré, 2000: 17). A romanticisation of the pre-colonial period saw past leaders, such as Sunjata and Askia Mohammed recast as heroes. Konaré (2000: 22) judges this as problematic:

The perpetual agitation of the past and its heroes does not permit us to move forward; rather it leads us to the hardening of positions around values that are undoubtedly shared but which belong to another era. Too much remembering can become an obstacle.

While oral history in Mali is transmitted by *griots* (Jansen & Austen, 1996; Jansen *et al.*, 1995), written sources on pre-colonial Malian history are scarce and are predominantly written by Arabic and Western visitors to the country, rather than the indigenous population. Written sources on Djenné's history link its rise and fall to that of Timbuktu (Imperato, 1989). Both towns were centres of scholarship and became the principal trade hubs after the fall of the Kingdom of Ghana founded by the Soninke (approx 4th Century AD to 13th Century AD). The Kingdom of Ghana derived its wealth from the gold trade and although the rulers of the Kingdom of Ghana were Animist, they accepted the presence of a large number of Muslim traders and administrators that enabled the trans-Saharan gold trade. The Almoravid invasions that followed effectively destroyed the Kingdom of Ghana and started to

bring Islam to parts of modern day Mali. Historical sources on the rise of the Kingdom of Mali are scarce:

The early history of Mali is unclear. However, around A.D. 1230, Soundiata Keita (also known as Mari Djata), the son of a Malinke chief of the Keita clan, became the head of Mali, then a small vassal state of Sosso. Ibn Khaldun (1331-1382) an Arab historian residing in North Africa, provided some of the most detailed information about Soundiata and Mali, which he obtained from travellers and traders who had been to Mali. (Imperato, 1989)

Djenné itself first came under the control of the Kingdom of Mali, then was captured by Sonni Ali Ber (a Songhay) in 1468 and later fell to the Moroccans. Merchandise from Timbuktu was traded through Djenné which acted as an *entrepôt* (intermediate trade centre) during the Songhay Kingdom. In the early 19th Century, Djenné fell under the rule of Cheikou Amadou Bari, and was then occupied by the *Tukulor* under El Hadj Omar Tall in 1862 until it was finally annexed by the French in 1893.

The creation of the French Soudan began in 1878 with a series of incursions under the Governor Brière de l'Isle (Robinson, 2000). Beginning from a series of posts strung along a line of advance stretching from Kayes on the Upper Senegal to Bamako on the Niger, military forays gradually extended French influence across what was to become French Soudan. The *Commandant Supérieur* Archinard served between 1888-91 and again 1892-93. He destroyed the last garrisons of the Umarian State, then captured Samori Ture (who had constructed a powerful state on the Upper Niger by 1880s) and installed a French military regime across the area. Louis Archinard is still a contentious figure in Mali today as discussed by De Jorio (2006) who describes how

the attempted removal of his statue from Ségou in 2000 caused a widespread outcry from the population of the town and a subsequent retraction of the decision.

The guides in Djenné tend to talk about the history of the town through a discussion of its architecture. However, as has been shown by Bourgeois (1987) in relation to the construction of Djenné's three Mosques, establishing an accurate history of events is far from straightforward. In fact, as he reveals, the 'accepted' history in Djenné hides a series of controversial events such as the suppression of smaller neighbourhood Mosques and the destruction of Djenné's second Mosque (built between 1834-36) by deliberate neglect and the blocking of the drains. This history has to remain hidden as it is against Islamic law to destroy places of worship. Negotiating history in Djenné is therefore always a means of imposing a narrative on past events to best suit contemporary purposes.

The Guides

In order to understand many of the new challenges facing the guides of Djenné, their profession needs to be put into its larger political and economic context. Unbeknown to many of the guides, the tourist industry is one of Mali's greatest economic hopes and consequently the government is taking an increasing interest in its promotion and regulation. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) for Africa reported that tourism to the continent grew at a greater pace than tourism to the rest of the world (6.6% between 1995 and 2000, as opposed to 4.9% for the rest of the world⁷⁷). The UNWTO are optimistic about Africa's future due to its proximity to Europe (both Africa's and the world's main source of visitors) and a new agreement

⁷⁷ <http://www.unwto.org/regional/africa/menu.htm>

aiming to liberalise air traffic within Africa, the Yamoussoukro Declaration (UNESCO, 1999). However, a few countries attract the bulk of tourism to Africa (Tunisia, Morocco and South Africa) and Sub-Saharan Africa still only accounts for just 1.5% of world tourism receipts⁷⁸. In 2004, Mali recorded 148 million US dollars in tourist receipts, compared to France that recorded 40 billion US dollars and Morocco that recorded 4.5 billion dollars. The tourist industry in Mali is reliant on a few key locations in the country to attract tourists, three of which are World Heritage sites:

It is said that the Mopti-Dogon-Bandiagara-Djenné-Timbuktu area has a potential of attracting about 20,000 tourists a year. This could under global estimates generate annual revenues of 10 million US\$ in foreign exchange. (UNESCO/ PNUD, 1997: 13)⁷⁹

The guides in Djenné occupy a complex space linking the town to the outside world through tourism. They are an exclusively male group⁸⁰ and their profession is considered to be of low status. The negative reputation of guides is as well known in Djenné as it is documented in travel guides (Hudgens & Trillo, 1999: 337). Local people do not like the guides' flashy ways or the way they run after tourists. Parents and teachers are worried that young boys, seduced by the easy money to be made from tourism, will increasingly abandon their studies and the promise of traditional jobs. The guides are also associated with non-Islamic behaviour through their contacts with tourists, as they are regularly exposed to alcohol consumption and other negative behavioural traits assigned to tourists including inappropriate dress and public displays of affection. The guides are the catalysts for broader changes in

⁷⁸ <http://www.unwto.org/regional/africa/menu.htm>

⁷⁹ PNUD /UNESCO (Programme des Nations Unis pour le Développement), Rapport de Mission, Juillet 1997.

⁸⁰ In 2006, I had only been told about the existence of one female guide working in the Dogon Country.

the town, as they have taken up 'modern' or 'westernised' dress codes (see photo), they have a perceived lack of respect for older generations and engage in conspicuous consumption of new technology such as mobile phones and the internet.

Dramane's story

I first heard about the guide, Dramane, from other guides. He was considered by the other guides as one of the success stories of the profession. I tried to catch up with him on various different occasions but he was often travelling away from Djenné. When we finally did meet, six months into my fieldwork, I found him to be a very charming and well informed man, unusually self-deprecating for a guide.

Dramane is now in his early thirties. He was born in Abidjan, where his father had a job working at the port. His parents were both originally from Djenné and had gone to the Ivory Coast as migrant workers. His earliest memories are of the people who came to his home in Abidjan from Djenné, seeking work and shelter. At one time, his father was employing up to forty people from Djenné at the port of Abidjan. He told me that from this early exposure to a constant stream of people from Djenné he learnt about the town's culture, the way of speaking, preparing food and social greetings.

Having been named after his grandmother's father, Dramane had a very special relationship with his grandmother who called him 'father' all her life. This bond meant that after five years in Abidjan, his grandmother in Djenné called for him and he moved there to be by her side, leaving behind his father, his father's three wives and his eighteen siblings. In Djenné, he was sent to the local Koranic and French schools and lived with his grandmother on the little money his father sent them. After his father's retirement, the money ran out and the savings that were assumed to have

been invested in cows in Djenné had also gone. This was due to a combination of the death of many cows in the droughts of the 1980s and the fact that cows entrusted to others from a great distance are often stolen, sold on or taken by other members of the family without permission. As Dramane told me: “You have to follow your cows closely if you don’t want to lose them”.

The next stage of his young life was very hard as he and his grandmother had no money and had to rely on the generosity of their neighbours for food and clothing. Finally, in desperation, his grandmother left for Abidjan to plead directly with his father and left Dramane in the care of her neighbour, a teacher at the local school. This was done through a protracted process of finding a kinship link between the two families, which, however tenuous, ensured that Dramane could be accepted by the neighbour as a family member. Upon the return of his grandmother, he got lost between her home and the home of his adoptive mother; this allowed him to say he was in one place when in fact he was in the street or hanging around in the market with other children. He started to avoid going to school.

Dramane’s first encounter with tourists was in the market when he was ten years old. An elderly Italian woman was trying to buy a fan from a Bambara trader and was failing to be understood. Dramane interpreted in French for her and was rewarded by spending the rest of the day helping the Italian woman with her shopping. At the end of the day, she gave him 500 CFA (£0.50), a considerable sum of money at the time. He rushed home to give it to his grandmother who did not believe he had earned it honestly so frog-marched him back to the hotel where the Italian woman was staying. Having re-assured her that it was in fact earned honestly, they spent the money by celebrating with a big meal and it was at this moment that Dramane says he

definitively abandoned school for a childhood spent following tourists, despite the best efforts of teachers and fellow pupils sent out to try and catch him.

Tourism at the time in Djenné was organised through a government run association named the *Société Malienne d'Exploitation de Ressources Touristiques* (SMERT). At the entrance of every tourist town in Mali, a SMERT office stood alongside the police control barrier, ensuring that tourists had to go through a local guide to visit the town. There was no training in place for the guides and many of them did not speak French so their job was more one of accompaniment than cultural interpreter. The SMERT guides were obviously very hostile to the *petits guides*, the children like Dramane who hung around in front of the Mosque hoping to show tourists around. Dramane was regularly beaten by the SMERT guides, had his earnings stolen from him and was dragged to the police station where they threatened him with a re-education camp in Bamako. One loophole the SMERT office could do nothing about were the diplomatic cars that were not required to stop at the barriers. These diplomats were free to walk around Djenné as they pleased and consequently Dramane and children like him could befriend them. One such lucky encounter enabled Dramane to befriend a man from the French Embassy who having heard his tale of hardship went with him to the Police Station and asked them to leave him alone. In the end, the SMERT guides gave in and let him have the job of making tea at their office. There he found that the guides were mostly illiterate and relied on the old Mosque guard to tell the tourists the history of Djenné. Dramane spent time with this man, learning his oral history off by heart. He also came across a guidebook to Djenné, '*Le Guide du Routard*', and set about teaching himself Djenné's history.

His first trip to tourist destinations outside Djenné came through an international travel company. Some tourists he befriended asked if he could accompany them on the rest of their trip around Mali to help with their bags and interpretation. His grandmother gave her permission and they set off to Timbuktu and Gao. The trip enabled him to befriend other guides and begin to learn some of the history of these other towns. Upon his return, he was paid 20,000 CFA (£20) in tips with which he repaired his grandmother's house which had fallen into a state of ruin. This is the point at which he sees his status within the town changing as he moved on from his status as a '*petit guide*'. *Petits guides* still bring deep shame on their families. Dramane told me: "A well educated child would never become a guide".

Through being one of the first guides in Djenné to work all over Mali, together with his contacts with big travel agencies, Dramane soon started making a very good living out of tourism. He spoke a bit of English picked up from tourists along the way but Anglophone travel agencies were increasingly asking him to learn English formally. This he did through the help of an American friend who worked at the *Banque Africaine du Développement* in Abidjan. The man paid for him to attend the American Business School in Abidjan for six months and acted as his host. He would go and see his parents at the weekend and when he left and started to work again, he sent his father money from Djenné. His father was surprised that for the first time money was leaving Djenné to go to Abidjan as for years it had been the other way around. Dramane's new found English skills allowed him not only to work in tourism but also for Anglophone television production companies. He worked on the BBC's Michael Palin documentary as well as with other journalists and photographers. Most recently, he helped a German production company make a documentary about illegal immigration to Europe through northern Mali and Algeria.

Dramane is now a wealthy man in Djenné. He has opened his own bar/nightclub in the previously derelict *Maison des Jeunes* which he rents out for weddings and special occasions. He also took the lead in setting up the new Guides' Office in Djenné in 2005, the SMERT having closed in 1988 and the profession being essentially unregulated since then until recent measures taken by the Malian Government. Having had a long term relationship with an American Peace Corps volunteer, he succumbed to family pressure and married a Peul girl, chosen for him by his family. They now have two children.

Dramane's story is illuminating on a number of levels. Firstly, despite coming from a Peul family, he does not mention cattle herding as a viable option for him. His father had to leave Djenné to find work and the cattle that were intended as a form of wealth for the family were lost due to drought or bad management. For a child, the tourists in Djenné are a symbol of wealth and fascination. It is not unusual for parents to encourage their children to ask white visitors for sweets or money. For many children who do not speak French, the phrases '*toubabou cadeaux*' or '*toubabou bonbons*' are learnt off by heart at an early age. There does not seem to be shame associated with such behaviour. However, giving up school or employment to become a guide does bring shame on the family. To a certain extent, this is due to religious conservatism and a distrust of non-Islamic behaviour. The fact that children abandon school to become guides is also considered ill-advised as education (both Koranic and French) is considered important. However, the reality is that many guides earn a better living than the majority of the population of Djenné. Their jobs are however seasonal, precarious and dependent on an unpredictable flow of tourists.

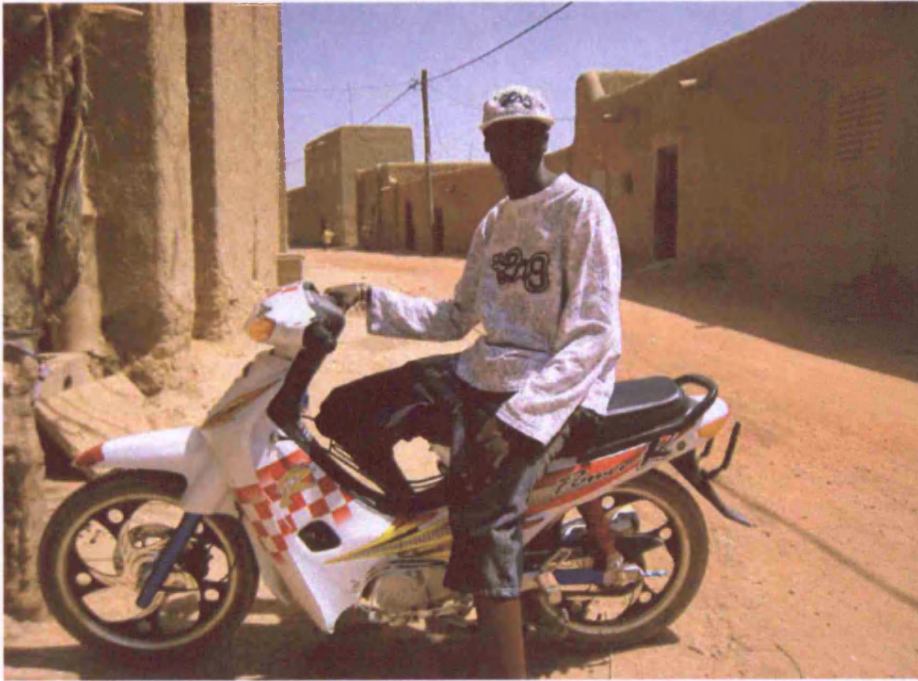


Figure 19. Patrick le Magnifique

The guides in Djenné stand out due to their clothes and access to status symbols such as motorbikes and mobile phones.

The guides' presence in Djenné is very conspicuous. They are conspicuous not only through their consumption of Western style clothes, music and technology but also due to their youth and fearless attitude towards the outside world (Figure 19). Their physical presence is felt by tourists and locals alike as the places they choose to spend time in are public, such as the main square and the entrance to the town. The guides are always watching what is going on in Djenné as they are forever on the look out for new business. They are also suspicious of any threats to the monopoly they have over the tourists. When visitors sought me out in Djenné, I had to make it very clear that they were in the town to see me. In fact, I had to make sure one of the guides was informed of their visit so that the message not to harass my friends was passed on to all the guides. On two occasions, I was indirectly accused of being a guide myself when a series of white visitors came to visit me in the space of a few weeks. Similarly,

one of the Peace Corps volunteers in the town was accused of being a guide when some of the other volunteers from Mali paid her a visit.

The accusations were interesting on several levels. Firstly, it was part of a wider speculation about the true reason for my presence in the town. Secondly, it demonstrated that despite the guides' contact with tourists and a Western way of life, it was credible to some of them that I would be secretly operating as a guide, earning 5000 CFA (£5) in an afternoon. It seemed to contradict the assumption that white people are rich and potentially an endless source of financial support (such as the three expatriates who have built houses in the town). Whatever the reason for their suspicions, it seems to indicate that they feel their position is precarious, and that they are alert to any threat that may undermine their role as the cultural brokers between Djenné and the visitors from the outside⁸¹.

Like Dramane, many of the guides have travelled to other tourist destinations in Mali and beyond. They have access to people who can literally change their lives, as was the case for Papa, discussed later. In order to successfully operate in the tourist economy, the guides have acquired a wide range of communication, business and practical skills, and are often imaginative and highly adaptive in the face of new opportunities. For example, one of the guides was very keen to borrow a book I owned entitled 'Birds of West Africa'. He was aware that tourists are interested in the wildlife around the town and wanted to be in a position to exploit this market (specialist ornithological tours have begun to come to Djenné and the surrounding area). Another guide used some capital he had been sent from a friend in France to

⁸¹ Another potential explanation is that some academics who have previously worked in Mali, including undertaking research in Djenné, occasionally return to the town with tourists on an organized lecture tours of the country.

open a tourist art shop. The shop had the advantage of being situated on the main square so attracted through-business as well as tourists brought to the shop by the guides. Other business ventures included selling t-shirts with prints of the Mosque on the front (the result of the collaboration between a guide and a Japanese tourist). Some of the guides are also employed in other roles, such as language teaching and traditional subsistence activities.

The tourist season

As is true for the rest of Mali, the tourist season⁸² is short and the income generated during these few months must sustain those working in tourism for the rest of the year. Additionally, tourism in Djenné tends to be restricted to Sunday nights and Mondays with very little tourism for the rest of the week. The number of tourists visiting Djenné has been increasing gradually over the years. In 1996, the *Mairie* declared receiving tourist tax from approximately 5000 tourists. In 2004, the figure had risen to approximately 8000⁸³ (although in an interview in 2007, the Director of the Cultural Mission reported a figure of 15,000 tourist visits to Djenné⁸⁴). However, the competition for tourists' income is still high and leads to aggressive and underhand business techniques.

The tourists arriving in Djenné have to cross the river outside the town before travelling the last few kilometres into Djenné. This crossing is the first point of contact between incoming tourists and local guides. There is a clear hierarchy of

⁸² High season runs from approximately early December to the end of February, there is also a short 'mini season' in June/July.

⁸³ Personal Communication, employee of Cultural Mission - 03/03/2005. However, the figure given by the Director of the Cultural Mission in September 2007 is 15,000 visitors to Djenné.

⁸⁴ http://www.afribone.com/article.php3?id_article=8021 (Downloaded Jan 2008)

guides and 'code of honour' that dictates that once a guide has made an agreement with a tourist, another guide may not come along and '*gache son marché*' (spoil his deal), however underhand the manner in which the original agreement was made. Techniques to entice tourists include telling them that they have been sent to meet them, pretending to know their guide from the tourists' previous destination or declaring that they are the official guide from the tourist's intended hotel.

The river crossing is a perfect place for guides to hunt for business. They use the analogy of hunting amongst themselves, especially when a large group of tourists arrive at once. Tourists who arrive in large groups are labelled by the derogatory term '*chumpas*' and the tourist season is referred to as '*la chasse aux chumpas*' (the *chumpas* hunt). As a vehicle approaches the river crossing, the dust and noise announcing its arrival triggers calls of '*chumpas chumpas*' amongst the waiting guides who swarm on the vehicles as they to cross the river. Many tour groups are brought by guides from outside Djenné who are well practiced in the art of deflecting the attention of the guides and tend to have long standing relationships with one particular guide in Djenné. Once this is found out, the other guides will lose interest and move on to the next group of tourists. Unaccompanied tourists will usually be hounded until they give in to one guide and any attempts at 'going it alone' in Djenné usually fails due to their sheer perseverance.

The recent creation of the *Bureau des Guides* in Djenné is meant to impose a turn-taking structure on the guides and therefore start to diffuse this aggressive competition. One merchant reported that he was outraged after talking to a tourist in his shop who had originally intended to spend three days in Djenné but had decided to leave after only one day due to the constant pestering of the guides. The Tourist

Office, *Mairie* and Cultural Mission are all concerned with this and trying to regulate the guides' behaviour through a series of bureaucratic measures.

The guides themselves do however have a high level of agency in the negotiations with the Tourist Office, the Cultural Mission, the hotels and restaurants. Through being the main point of contact between the locals and the tourists, the guides influence the tourists' choice of hotels, restaurant and shops. All the artisan shops in Djenné pay the guides a commission on any sale made by the tourists they accompany, as do hotels and restaurants. I was perplexed as to why hotels and restaurants allowed the guides to sit around menacingly in close proximity to the tourists until I realised the full extent of this symbiotic relationship. I witnessed an example of the lengths hotel managers will go to in order not to offend guides when a tourist bought a *bogolan* cover with the help of a hotel manager as a translator. The manager was very uncomfortable with the request but nevertheless obliged and the purchase was delivered later by the merchant on his bicycle. The tourist was surprised that he was not able to carry his purchase back to the hotel himself but the manager explained to me afterwards that if a guide had seen him in the company of a tourist who had bought something with his help they would automatically assume he had taken the commission, something that in their minds was rightfully theirs.

Guides also have access to tourists through means of contact through the internet and mobile phones and are regarded as having good links with the outside world. Personal relationships between guides and tourists do occur and are often a way to have access (often temporarily, very occasionally permanently) to the resources of the Western world. Although these relationships sometimes reflect reciprocal affection,

relationships between young guides and older Western women are the subject of discussion and amusement amongst the guides.

Some of the older and more established guides have a regular supply of tourists, recommended by their past clients, guidebooks or travel agencies. These guides are usually closely affiliated to a hotel and rarely hang around touting for business. Most of the guides in Djenné will also be closely linked into the wider tourist circuit in Mali, sometimes through travel agencies and often through business contacts in other main tourist destinations. In the final analysis, however, the guides are entirely reliant on tourists visiting the town. During the visit of Mali's President, Amadou Toumani Touré, to Djenné in February 2005, one of the guides said to me, "*ATT, je n'en n'ai pas besoin. Mon ATT c'est les touristes*" (I don't need ATT, my ATT are the tourists").

The guides therefore live in a strange space somewhere in between the tourists and the town, a space which sometimes circumvents local officials and national control. They have a very sophisticated understanding of the tourists and know which nationalities are most likely to be generous (German, English, Chinese) or not (French). The guides have a large insight into the lives and attitudes of the tourists through spending so much time with them, often eating and travelling with them for several days or weeks. Unlike the findings of van Beek (2003) in Dogon Country discussed later, the majority of guides I spoke to wanted to leave Djenné, sometimes to go and live in another West African country but most often to go and live in the West. Life in Djenné did not compare favourably in their minds to life elsewhere.

One of the main difficulties facing guides seems to be their inability to hold on to the wealth they acquire during the tourist season. Bumping into a guide I knew well one day, he explained to me that he was in bad financial trouble as he had not managed to

make the money he had anticipated during the tourist season. Consequently, he had had to sell his motorbike (which he originally bought on credit and was still paying off at 30,000 CFA (£30) per month) and also has a monthly debt to a tailor for some clothes he bought for his wife. He also had to sell his DVD player to liberate money to pay for his family's ill health. It is perhaps hard to feel sorry for a guide in Djenné who has to relinquish material luxuries such as a motorbike or DVD player when the majority of the population are extremely poor, but it is symptomatic of a wider phenomenon in Djenné which means that something is yours for only as long as other demands are not made upon it. In the minds of the guides, this contrasts sharply with the seeming ease with which tourists acquire and hold on to their material wealth.

Becoming a guide in Djenné

In 2003, the Malian Government decided through a vote at the National Assembly to impose a structure on the Guide's Profession by introducing national exams and a regulatory body. The exams, widely advertised through the media and administered by OMATHO in 2005, were a compulsory requirement for all people in Mali wanting to operate as a tourist guide. For the first time, a formal structure was being established which required would-be-guides to prove their Malian nationality and identity. The exams, which were held in regional capitals across the country, allowed people to apply to either be regional or national guides. Successful candidates were issued with a guide badge bearing their photographic identification. OMATHO set up a website listing all the official guides. A complaints procedure has been put in place so that a guide will lose his licence if he has three upheld complaints made against him.

The exam was intended to test the guides' knowledge in three areas: health and safety, historical knowledge and courtesy and behaviour. It was by all reports very straightforward, and was arrived at after a series of compromises. The initial intention was for all Malian Guides to have a high level of education. At first, OMATHO wanted guides to have reached a level of *Baccalauréat* + four years of higher education, then this was adjusted down to *Baccalauréat* level, then it was suggested that a *Diplôme des Etudes Fondamentales* would suffice (achieved after 9 years of education) but this would still have excluded many of the people already operating as guides, such as Dramane. Finally, the national test was devised, and training courses offered, to dispense of any formal educational requirements. However, a few of the Djenné guides still failed the exam, adding to the others in Djenné who either did not turn up on the day of the exam (owing to scepticism about the whole process) or were excluded for not having Malian nationality.

This minority of former guides became an ongoing problem for the OMATHO in Djenné attempting to impose the new legislation. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that the guides themselves closed ranks around those who had failed the test and colluded in helping them to obtain work. The Director of the OMATHO in Djenné, himself a former guide in Bamako, and generally on good terms with the guides in Djenné, was given clear instructions to report any guide operating without permission to the police. The guides were also required to register their clients at the OMATHO office to allow the Ministry of Tourism to have a clearer idea of the number and provenance of tourists to Djenné. These restrictions led to a number of clashes, arrests and even short spells in prison for some of the unlicensed guides. As a result, the Director of the OMATHO (who has subsequently left the post) was subjected to physically aggressive behaviour and threats of witchcraft.

The national guide tests encroached on a system of power and self-regulation that was already present in the town. The attempt to exclude the guides who failed the test from the profession was undermined by the guides' solidarity in the face of outside intervention. Despite the often aggressive competition between the guides, the exams were not seen as an opportunity for the majority who passed to exclude the minority who did not. Instead, the guides either allowed their former colleagues to work illegally by turning a blind eye or by working with them and halving the money to bypass the legislation. There is a keen awareness in Djenné that taking away a man's livelihood often commits his family to destitution. Additionally, the guides have a strong sense of identity, re-enforced by the use of nicknames (all the guides have a nickname such as Patrick le Magnifique, John Travolta, Chirac... drawn from an aspect of their appearance, biography or personality). Prior to the exams, it seems that being a guide in Djenné was simply a matter of being recognised as such by the other guides. The guides see a strong distinction between themselves and the young boys and teenagers known as the '*petits guides*.' However, most of the guides were at some stage *petits guides* themselves. Some of the *petits guides* do attach themselves to older guides in a version of an apprenticeship, or are their younger siblings and are therefore tolerated. Before the test, however, there was no official mechanism to prevent tourists using children to guide them around the town, despite posters put up in order to discourage them from doing so.

A few months after the exams, the guides seemed to be responding pro-actively to the new interest being shown in their activities. With Dramane as the main instigator, they set up an office: the *Bureau des Guides de Djenné* at the entrance of the town and they established a turn taking system to ensure that all the guides worked regularly. The new system also had the effect of reducing some of the aggressive behaviour

between the guides competing for tourists. Most of the guides who had failed the exams intend to sit them in the next round, so despite bypassing the new rules temporarily, the new system seems to have been accepted in principle. By early 2008 however, the new *Bureau des Guides* had ceased to operate and guides were once again fending for themselves.

Papa's story

Papa has been exposed to tourism since he was six years old. He was born in Mopti but his parents came to settle in Djenné when he was very young. His father was a weaver and used to work outside the Campement Hotel, making Peul wedding blankets. Papa never went to school, he used to sit next to his father and meet the tourists who stopped to look at the blankets. Papa had polio as a very young child and could consequently only drag himself along the ground, having lost the use of both of his legs. He met a French couple working locally when he was eleven years old and they gave him his first wheelchair, brought from France. With his new wheelchair, he was able to follow tourists around the town. Looking back he says that he would describe his behaviour as pestering because at that time he did not understand what tourism was.

At the age of thirteen, an American couple took some photographs of him and a year later an American doctor, armed with his photograph, came looking for him in Djenné. In 1998, the doctor arranged for him to go to the United States to have an operation on his legs. He ended up spending nine months in the US and consequently now speaks good English. At the time of his departure for the US, he was very scared as he only knew about America through films. However, his travel arrangements were well organized and he was flown to Paris, where a family met him and looked after

him for a night. Then, he was put on a flight to Chicago where another host family was waiting. His strongest memory was that it was very cold as he first arrived in Chicago in February 1998. He attended a language school and made friends with Cambodian children who sent him cards and visited him during his convalescence from three long operations. He says that in the US he learnt English and how to walk, two things that have changed his life. When he first got back to Djenné, it felt as if the whole town had turned up at his home to see him. At the time, he was still walking with sticks but now he can walk unaided.

Looking back, he still doesn't understand why his American host family chose to help him. At first, neither he nor his parents wanted him to go to the US. His parents were afraid he might leave and never return. In the US he understood that his host family was religious and that they were helping other people around them. He thinks maybe that is why they chose to help him. Another thing his parents did not want was for him to become a guide but now they see that he is successful and they are happy. Papa regularly works with international photographers and travels around the country. He no longer works as he used to, waiting for tourists by the river. He understands that tourists arrive in Djenné hot and tired from a long journey.

Papa is one of the guides in Djenné who did not attend the national test. He is consequently left in a difficult position where he runs the risk of being fined and imprisoned if he carries on working with his regular clients. Partly, he did not make the effort to attend the test as he did not think that he needed to. Most of his clients come to Djenné with his name. At the time of test, he was in Timbuktu with photographers. On his return he went to testing centre with his documents but he was too late. Papa feels angry that many of the guides who passed the test are not in

his view very good at their jobs. He feels that they do not possess the 'art of speaking' in front of clients. He thinks that the history of Djenné is very important and that the test was not hard enough and consequently did not distinguish between good and bad guides. Despite these misgivings, he says he will attend the next national test (although the tests were only intended to take place every five years).

Having not passed the guide test, Papa has to rely on his colleagues to give him a share of the income they make from the tourists he passes on to them. He is finding the situation particularly difficult as his father has recently died and he is left with the financial responsibility for the family. Several times, Papa was caught illegally accompanying tourists in the town, and once hosting them in his home (this is against the new health and safety rules set out by OMATHO). After several warnings, he ended up spending a day in prison as punishment. His long term ambition is to open a hotel, but, like many people in Djenné, he guards his ambitions fiercely, afraid that someone else will make trouble for him if he speaks of them publicly.

Papa feels that many people call themselves guides but to truly be a guide is something deeper. He says that if you put ten guides in Djenné next to each other and ask them the history of the town, not even two of them will tell you the same thing. He says that most of them make up dates, many of them are illiterate and pick up the bits of information they can from what they hear on the street.

Papa is aware of UNESCO and thinks that they are protecting Djenné's architecture from the outside world. To him, the threat comes from people who have left Djenné for work and may come back with higher ambitions for their homes (however this is contradicted by interviews undertaken with those who have left and returned to Djenné and tend to be very conservative). He says that if Djenné's architecture

changes, the tourists will stop coming as they would not come to Djenné to see what they can see at home. Despite feeling positively about the Dutch housing restoration project and the new sanitation project, Papa is uncomfortable with the town getting used to outside help, in his words: “If every time we need something we cross our arms and wait, that’s not an attractive thing”.

Papa is one of the few people in Djenné to have travelled to the United States (some of the artisans, such as Ousmane the embroiderer and some of the masons went to Washington for the Folk Life Festival in 1995 as described in Chapter 5). His fluency in English and remarkable life story make him popular with both tourists and guides. His experience of life beyond Djenné seems to have given him a complex insight into the consequences of accepting help and influence from the outside. He is uncomfortable with a position of simply waiting for help and feels that the future of Djenné is reliant on the solidarity of the people within the town.

Djenné and multiple histories

For Papa, it is important for the credibility of the guides for them to be conversant in the ‘correct’ history of Djenné. However, as will be discussed below, the history of Djenné is only one element of tourists’ interest in the town. Furthermore, it is hard to establish, from a largely oral tradition, a precise chronology of events. Debates around the buildings of Djenné’s three Mosques are just one example of controversy (Bourgeois, 1987). Prior to the guide tests, it is true that many guides did get the facts and dates ‘wrong’, when referenced with travel guides (for French speakers *Le Guide du Routard Mali*, *Petit Futé Mali*; for English speakers *the Rough Guide to West Africa*, *Lonely Planet Guide to West Africa*, *The Bradt Travel Guide to Mali*) that become the repositories of ‘true’ knowledge. The guide books also had the effect of fixing prices

for guided tours of the town, causing some concern to guides who want to have the freedom to negotiate prices themselves.

It is as yet unclear whether or not the guide test has imposed a new uniformity on the guides' discourses. What seemed to be the case at the time the guide test was being implemented is that with reference to historical 'facts', tourists trusted their books more than their guides, although the books were written by people who to some extent relied on local guides for their content. From interviews further discussed below, it seems that tourists are comfortable with a multi-vocal approach to the history of Djenné, incorporating oral history, folklore and their guidebooks. In fact., the guides can go beyond the official narrative of the guidebook to provide an insight into local culture. The imposition of regulated history through tests came at same time as other regulations affecting tourist industry in Djenné, implemented through the OMATHO.

OMATHO

The *Office Malienne du Tourisme et de l'Hôtellerie* (OMATHO) office in Djenné first opened its doors to guides and tourists in 2004. The office is situated on a main street and consists of a desk, a few promotional posters of Malian tourism on the walls and a framed map of Mali leaning against the wall. The man in charge at the time of the office's opening (who has subsequently left to open a travel agency in Bamako) was at first met with some hostility from certain quarters as part of a wider feeling that levels of bureaucracy are brought to Djenné without solving the immediate problems faced by many householders.

The creation of an OMATHO office in Djenné is part of the process of decentralisation. A decision was made that the OMATHO should have a permanent presence in the main tourist towns in the country. One of the OMATHO's most important everyday roles is looking after tourism locally through being an arbitrator for problems between tourists and guides or hotels. The OMATHO is the first port of call for any disputes and has the power to refer them to the authorities for arbitration. Hotels and restaurants need to be registered with the OMATHO and those who fail to do so are issued with warnings until they comply or are shut down. The hotel and restaurant inspection are intended to check basic things such as fire exits and hygiene standards. The attempt to crack down on guides who let people sleep in their homes comes under this same umbrella of measures, as the authorities are worried about food poisoning or accidents that may lead to them being sued. Tourists are seen as powerful as they have resourceful embassies to back them up.

For the same reason, travel companies operating in Mali need to pay 2 million CFA (€2000) into a trust fund to set themselves up. This fund is then used to pay off any tourists or legal fees arising from disputes. If a company closes, the money is returned. As well as the tourist tax discussed in Chapter 6, a second tourist tax is paid by each tourist per night (500 CFA (€0.50) per room per night). This goes to central government to pay for the work of the OMATHO.

As part of its drive to standardize the tourist's experience in Djenné, the OMATHO is listing all its accredited guides on a website and hopes to set fixed prices for visits thus allowing tourists to prepare their holiday and have greater control over their time in Mali. A big aim for the OMATHO is to be able to negotiate tourist access to Djenné's Mosque during non prayer time for people who are appropriately dressed.

The suggestion has been made to the Mayor in terms of potential income and is still under discussion. As had been discussed, the issue of allowing tourists access to the Mosque was one of the flashpoints in setting off the riot in September 2006. Consequently, any decision to allow tourists to enter the Mosque would be very unpopular with many *Djennenkés* unless they could see visible and immediate economic benefits.

The OMATHO office also had to collaborate with the Cultural Mission. In some ways, their remits overlap, albeit with different foci. While the Cultural Mission is restricted to undertaking the work of the protection of cultural heritage and sensitisation of local populations, the OMATHO is tasked with the promotion of cultural heritage for the purpose of developing the tourist industry. The OMATHO's success can be measured in economic terms while the Cultural Mission measures its success in terms of visibility and protection. It was interesting to note that one of the first ideas of the OMATHO was to establish a museum in Djenné, an ambition which stepped on the toes of the Cultural Mission who had been drawing up plans for a museum for years. The OMATHO had concrete plans (and budgets) to bring hotels, restaurants and guides in Djenné in line with its vision. It was also helped by the fact that as its aims were directly economic, and so it immediately had the ear of the people it sought to influence.

The Cultural Mission, however, brings money to Djenné in a far more opaque and indirect way (as discussed in Chapter 4) and consequently suffers from mistrust of the population. Juxtaposing the stated aims and functions of the OMATHO and the Cultural Mission brings to light one of the central problems with UNESCO's World Heritage Project in Djenné. For *Djennenkés* to respond UNESCO's pleas for restraint

vis-à-vis the architecture and archaeology of the town, UNESCO must develop a direct relationship with the population and explicitly show how its vision for the town will benefit the local population. If the Cultural Mission is not tasked with developing tourism, it needs to define itself as a useful contributor to Djenné's economy in some other way. In Djenné, heritage and tourism are inextricably linked. In a chapter entitled 'Heritage for People' Howard (2003: 50) argues:

Tourism, is to an extent, peripheral to heritage. It is a very important periphery, particularly as regards money, but heritage is conserved first and foremost by people for themselves...tourists then come along and want to see it, but no one supposed that if people stopped visiting the Tower of London we would destroy it.

This argument may ring true for the Mosque in Djenné. However, the entire 'town as monument' model advocated by UNESCO only makes sense if tourism can provide vital remuneration. In Djenné, tourism is not peripheral to heritage but central to its survival.

The regulation of tourism in Djenné can therefore be broken down into a number of areas. First, it is part of a broader attempt to regulate behaviour and ensure that tourists have a safe and pleasant experience. Second, it is an attempt to regulate what is said by the guides: historical accuracy and standardization are the two main objectives. Third, it is an exercise in making visible the tourist industry through the issuing of guide badges, the creation of websites and documentation.

Access to income from cultural heritage

The negotiations about the nature of historical knowledge in Djenné and the qualifications of guides to talk authoritatively about the past become visible in relation to tourist access to archaeological sites. Currently, guides are unable to take tourists to the protected site of Djenné-Djeno without being accompanied by an official guide from the Cultural Mission. This restriction serves two purposes: first, to regulate access to the site and ensure no further looting occurs and second, to ensure that the person showing tourists around the site has received adequate training in archaeology and is able to answer the tourists' questions.

This division between the town guides and the guides from the Cultural Mission (who are in fact Cultural Mission employees who derive additional income from their guiding activities) inevitably causes tensions. It serves to further alienate Djenné's population from its archaeological heritage as the Cultural Mission staff are all from outside Djenné and are therefore not well assimilated into Djenné's population. A possible solution would be giving interested Djenné guides adequate training which would allow them to disseminate knowledge about the sites to both tourists and the wider Djennenké population. The current division between the guides serves to reinforce existing power structures in the town by placing the professional knowledge of the Cultural Mission in opposition with the lay knowledge of *Djennenkés*.

Although the guides are the most visible part of Djenné's population to benefit from tourism, many other people earn a living from the industry. With the help of the Director of the OMATHO, we devised a diagram to show the impact of tourism on Djenné (Appendix 4). As well as people working in the restaurants and hotels in Djenné (cleaning, cooking, serving), home grown produce is sold to the hotels by

local women. Artisans and local shops benefit as well as people working in transport. In fact, although much could be done to improve the distribution of income from tourism, a lot of people in Djenné are already in some way reliant on the industry.

One such person is a drummer named Djakité. He was born and brought up in Djenné and taught himself how to play the drums on a big *Nido* (powdered milk) tin. When he was a teenager, a professional drummer moved to Djenné and took him on as an apprentice. His skill as a performer has allowed him to travel to Vitré in France (a town twinned with Djenné) during a cultural exchange. Although his day job is milling flour, he earns good money from drumming both for *Djennenkés* (10,000 CFA/£10) for a *Jembe* session, and during the tourist season when he performs at the hotel *Chez Baba* a couple of times a week.

The tourist

An exploration of the motivations of tourists who visit Djenné allows a conceptual link to be made between UNESCO's preoccupation with the preservation of the town and the demands of the tourist industry. It is assumed that tourists come to Djenné to see its unique architecture and archaeology. Why this may be the case for some, many combine this with a search of an emotional authentic experience, a search that is often unsettled by the reality of the town.

Using Urry's definition of the three important dichotomies defining tourists sites, Djenné can be characterised as historical, romantic and authentic (2002: 94). Urry's analysis is centred on a Foucauldian concept of an organised and systematised 'tourist gaze'. Despite the limitations of the concept (addressed by Urry 2002: 145), its application to Djenné is particularly illuminating. Although Djenné has been

described throughout this thesis as very much the object of the collective (and international) gaze, a tourist travelling to Djenné tends to be seeking the romantic, or individual, experience. In fact, for many tourists, the presence of a large number of other tourists, especially at the Monday market, detracts from their enjoyment of the town. This discomfort with the presence of other tourists can be analysed in different ways.

As well as the many organised tours that stop off in Djenné for a day, many tourists travel in small groups with a guide and a high number of independent travellers also come to the town. For some independent travellers, such as two young students from Belgium cycling across Mali, the presence of other tourists detracted from their feeling that their travels were an adventure. They described Djenné as 'touristy', a negative attribute which encompassed their feeling that there was nothing new to discover. In order to get around this and have a satisfying 'adventurous' experience, they sought out small villages and stayed there overnight, sleeping on floors and eating with families. For them, the liminal phase of their tourist '*Rite de Passage*' (Cohen, 1988) has to include a physical separation from all forms of familiarity, including language. Their compass throughout their travels was a '*Petit Futé*' guidebook; they however rejected the idea of employing a guide in person. Instead, they trusted that through serendipity they would meet people who would welcome them and give them an original or different insight into Malian culture. This required a level of trust that they were aware was risky, such as entrusting their bicycles to strangers or drinking water from unknown sources. The element of 'danger' or unscripted adventure was however central to their idea of travelling, a fact that became clear in their recounting of their travels in other parts of the world. They conceptualised their time in Djenné as a short interlude on their journey during

which they enjoyed meeting other tourists, visiting the town, and drinking beer in the hotels.

The Belgian cyclists' quest for the authentic can be defined by the urge to get off the beaten tourist track and interact with people who are not sensitised to the needs of tourists. Lindholm (2008: 39) describes this behaviour as being motivated by a modern desire for self-realization and an attempt to gain a heightened sense of who you really are by testing your physical and psychological limits. Lindholm rejects the idea that most tourists are satisfied with a staged or 'fake' experience (an idea he says has come from Jean Baudrillard's (1988) 'Simulacra and Simulations') and states that instead the concept of authenticity in travel has remarkable resilience.

Another quest for authenticity can be seen through tourists such as Betty, who tend to linger where others move on, thus gaining access to behind the scenes experiences. Betty, a woman in her sixties, has travelled alone all over the world. She is of mixed Chinese and French background and stood out due to her small stature and apparent vulnerability. Unlike many tourists who spend one or two nights in Djenné, Betty spent a few weeks in the town and came to know my host family well. Adopting many strategies of fieldwork, she ensured she ate with the family and accompanied them in their daily activities. Travelling on a small budget, she also quickly managed to negotiate cheaper accommodation by moving from the tourist quarters to the family's rooms, therefore making a move from the usual 'outside' space occupied by tourists to the 'inside' intimacy of family living. She insisted that the family refer to her as 'grandmother' establishing a symbolic kinship tie and ensuring that she was looked after and included by the family. Betty's presence coincided with Djenné's 2005 *Festival du Djennéry* and she asked me on several occasions whether she should

attend the evening performances, phrasing her question in terms of whether what she would see was 'authentic'.

It seems that in Betty's mind, as in the minds of many other tourists, there are two types of culture: 'unmediated culture' (authentic) as opposed to 'mediated culture' (monument). Her strategy was to access 'unmediated culture' through literally walking into people's lives and to a certain extent circumventing the tourist structures put in place to guide her trajectory around the county. Unlike the Belgian cyclists, she was not on a quest for an adventure in terms of physical danger and unpredictability but instead sought a meaningful encounter with people from a different culture. This was re-enforced by the fact that after her departure she kept in touch regularly with the family through postcards, each time signing herself of as 'grandmother'. Like the cyclists, Betty made reference to the *'Petit Futé'* by carrying with her photocopied pages of the book which she constantly annotated and edited. The pages provided a reference point and structure around which to understand her experiences and plan her travels. They were her point of entry into the culture, although by photocopying them and annotating them with comments and suggestions made by the people around her, she managed to personalise them and to a certain extent visually distance herself from the many tourists who conspicuously carried their guidebooks with them. Her quest for authenticity was not based around a desire for historical or cultural accuracy in the Festival performances she witnessed, but instead lay in the desire for an emotional authenticity which seemed to be at the heart of her impulse to constantly travel around the world. As noted by Selwyn commenting on the MacCannell's seminal work 'The Tourist':

If we agree with MacCannell and others that tourists seek the authentic, we need to add that such authenticity has two aspects, one of which has to do with feeling, the other with knowledge. (Selwyn, 1996: 7)

And as MacCannell himself remarks:

The touristic critique of tourism is based on a desire to go beyond the other 'mere' tourists to a more profound appreciation of society and culture... All tourists desire this deeper involvement with society and culture to some degree; it is a basic component of their motivation to travel. (MacCannell, 1973: 10)

As the guides' understanding of tourists' expectations has become more sophisticated, the number of tourist locations in Djenné has increased from the traditional route (the tomb of *Tapama Djennépo* the sacrificed virgin, the Holy Well *Nana Wangara*, the house of the *Chef du Village*); to take in more unexpected sights, often brought about by tourists questions and interests. These include local schools, peoples' homes, agricultural practices, visiting the fishermen by the river and taking part in local sporting activities. Consequently, 'knowledge' about Djenné is, for many tourists much less about facts and figures but more about a certain intimacy, taken to extremes by Betty.

Tourists therefore have the power to re-enfranchise certain parts of Djenné's population who have found themselves excluded by an elitist and archival reading of their heritage. This has been the case for some of the women artisans in Djenné who have organised a co-operative space to sell their work or for women working in the gardens who benefit materially from showing tourists around. However, these 'excursions into the ordinary' are only possible due to the wider framing of Djenné as a World Heritage site and one of the top three tourist destinations in the country.

The Mali Circuit

Almost all the tourists I spoke to in Djenné were undertaking in some form the traditional Mali tourist circuit of Bamako, Ségou, Djenné, Mopti, Dogon Country and Timbuktu. These places are widely acknowledged by the tour companies and travel guides as the places to visit in order to successfully 'do' Mali. The completion of the circuit is especially important as many tourists will only make one visit to the country in their lifetime. Other tourist destination such as the Northern town of Gao (home to the World Heritage site of the Tomb of the Askias) are starting to change some tourist circuits but only peripherally as the North of Mali remains both physically inaccessible due to the road running out, and somewhat dangerous, due to ongoing clashes between the Tuareg population and the Malian government (for a short overview see Oxby, 1996).

Unlike the cyclists or Betty, for whom the guides are the ugly face of tourism and emphasise the self-consciousness and staged experience of being a tourist, most tourists will visit Mali through the mediation of a guide. However, many of Betty's attitudes can be found in diluted forms in their discourse and expectations. For example, tour companies often employ a national guide who will accompany the tourists throughout their journey around the country (usually ten days to two weeks) as well as local guides on an *ad hoc* basis in towns such as Djenné. The additional use of local guides reassures the tourists that they are gaining access to 'authentic' or inside knowledge about a place. Local guides can also ensure tourists gain access, if only temporarily, to inside spaces such as houses or rooftops. The guides in Djenné tend to include a degree of personal narrative in their descriptions of the town and the tourists are reassured by the lively way in which they or their guide are received in

the different spaces they move through around the town. The indigenous guide can also share information about a place in a conspiratorial way with the tourists and become the embodiment of the annotated comments about a destination.

The majority of the tourists visiting Mali come from a Western rationalist tradition which is often at odds with many of the syncretic and superstitious beliefs found amongst their hosts. The tourists therefore tend to adopt a different persona for the duration of their time in the country. Examining the element of role play present in many tourist encounters, Urry (2002: 98) describes how tourists taking part in organised package tours 'play' at being a child by letting all the arrangements relating to their daily needs be taken over by the tour company. Similarly, tourists in Mali have to some extent to entrust their daily needs to the guides, especially in the Dogon Country where the guides provide an interesting contrast with the guides in Djenné.

Van Beek's (2003) description of tourism in Dogon Country is contrasted with tourism in Northern Cameroon. Put simply, his argument is that while in Dogon Country, the encounter between tourists and local people is largely positive and re-enforces Dogon feelings of cultural pride, amongst the Kapsiki of Northern Cameroon, the tourist encounter engenders negative feelings amongst local people about their own self-worth and re-enforces their desire to leave. He accounts for this by saying that it is the prime interest of the tourist that has consequences for how the host culture defines itself within the tourist encounter. In Dogon Country, tourists primarily come to experience Dogon village life (dances, architecture, animistic beliefs) thus re-enforcing Dogon pride. In Northern Cameroon, by contrast, tourists come to see the stunning scenery and to a certain extent avoid too much contact with the villages by keeping to certain defined tourist areas. This marginalisation of the local population

re-enforces feelings of inferiority in contrast to the tourists' perceived wealth and prestige.

Van Beek states that each tourist encounter creates its own sub-culture. In Dogon country, the tourists (many of whom have come from or are shortly about to go to Djenné via Mopti) enter an extraordinary world of villages perched on cliff tops, stunning views and stories of the mythical ancestors who used to inhabit the escarpment, the Tellem, who are believed to have had magical powers such as the ability to fly. Van Beek describes the attitudes of the Dogon guides towards tourists:

The setting of the cliff villages is for them a backdrop to what is valued most, the cultural performances. The physical and cultural attraction of their country is not a source of wonder but a self-evident fact. Dogon view the relation with their visitors as more or less permanent, and on the whole are prudent not to rupture it: they should give value for money. (Van Beek, 2003: 269)

For the tourist, the experience of visiting Dogon Country is largely escapist, as you are lulled by rhythm of walking through ever changing scenery punctuated by stops in villages or to take photographs from vantage points. During two visits to Dogon Country in 2004/2005, my guides described their services not only as pathfinders but also in terms of cultural mediation, nearer to the role of 'mentor' described by McGrath in her analysis of guides working in Peru (McGrath, 2005). They recounted warning tales of foolhardy tourists who had tried to explore the area alone only to run into difficulty. In particular, the guides explained that a tourist would not have the necessary cultural knowledge to know which parts of villages to avoid and would inevitably cause offence. A story I heard several times told of a Scandinavian family who, unbeknown to them, strayed into a sacred part of a village and had to pay

reparations to the village *Hogon* (priest) in the form of a black cow and a black chicken. The guides in Dogon Country therefore know themselves to be indispensable on two levels: firstly as physical guides, showing a path through the vast countryside, finding food, water and accommodation every night; secondly as cultural guides, negotiating access to villages and masked dance performances and steering tourists away from tabooed areas. The stories told by the guides of the flying Tellem ancestors blend in with the radical feeling of '*dépaysement*' experienced by the tourist who spend their nights climbing up Dogon ladders to sleep under the stars and awake to the sight of stereotypical African villages punctuated by Baobab trees and surrounded by spectacular scenery.

By contrast in Djenné, the guides have a harder job of selling their services. Many tourists feel that they can explore the town alone, as they would a European city, armed with their guidebook and rudimentary map. In the end, unaccompanied tourists tend to accept a guide to avoid constant pestering more than through a desire for a cultural commentary. The precariousness of the guides' position in some part explains their aggressive behaviour. In Djenné, a guide sells his services very much on the basis of accessing inside knowledge, not in terms of regulating behaviour or physical safety. Tourists who have come to Djenné from Dogon Country will often be exhausted and want to use their time in Djenné as a relaxing interlude before starting their journey to Timbuktu, or back to Bamako via Ségou. Like Dogon guides, Djenné guides are very aware of providing value for money (usually assessed in terms of hours spent with the tourists) and will be disappointed if a tourist does not want to take them up on their offer of visiting an outlying village or Djenné-Djeno, the archaeological site.

In Djenné, more so than in Dogon Country, there is an issue with the accuracy of the guides' historical knowledge as tourists may have a keen interest in vernacular architecture or the archaeological sites. The skills required from guides in Djenné therefore differ somewhat from guides in Dogon Country. The guide test however licenses guides based on the regions of Mali and so a Djenné guide will have a '*Region de Mopti*' license and be allowed to be a guide in Djenné, Dogon Country and Mopti. A minority of guides in Djenné passed the test to become a '*Guide National*', thus allowing them to accompany tourists anywhere in the country.

The role playing stance adopted by tourists visiting Djenné allows them to overlook the historical and factual discrepancies in the guides' discourses. Many of the tourists who visit Djenné are highly educated and will have researched the active interests they may have in Djenné's history, archaeology or architecture. What they are looking for from the guides is therefore often not the 'hard' facts that they can look up in their guidebooks or on the internet, but the 'soft' facts, or the 'art of speaking' described by Papa. A good guide in Djenné can reveal exciting trajectories through the town and introduce people to different experiences, such as the women's gardens on the outskirts of the town or a jeweller's workshop.

In Djenné, the collective and the individual gaze are somewhat at odds as people both seek a personal authentic experience while being confronted by the presence of numerous other tourists. As discussed, some tourists find strategies to navigate this tension, while others are content with a tour guide approach to their visit. While the OMATHO Director in Bamako is keen to promote 'cultural tourism' in Mali, an examination of some of the discourses of tourists coming to Djenné reveals a number of motivations, more or less catered for by the present tourism industry. OMATHO

sees its role as one of regulation, promotion and standardization. The desire to draw up a predictable 'tourist calendar', where key cultural events such as the re-mudding of Djenné's Mosque and the annual transhumance of the cattle are highlighted, would for some remove the joy of serendipitous discoveries. Similarly, banning guides from allowing tourists to stay in people's homes in Djenné (*chez l'habitant*), although brought in for legitimate health and safety reasons, can also be a disappointment for tourists seeking an 'authentic' experience. This authentic experience is for many rooted in an image of Mali as a pre-industrial society, where symbols of modernity are an intrusion and should be as much as possible airbrushed out. Within this context, regulation of guides' discourses and the tourist experience is not necessarily a desirable thing.

Cultural tourism in Mali however is being transformed by the international rise in popularity of Malian photography and music. Amadou and Miriam's internationally acclaimed album *Un Dimanche à Bamako* is one of many symbols of a new Malian modernity, picked upon by international travellers and expatriates alike. For example, one restaurant in Bamako, the *Boa Kao* is run by French expatriates, who, jaded by the Parisian art scene came to Bamako for inspiration. The restaurant is chic and relatively expensive and caters for expatriates and tourists comfortable with a modern Malian image. Music festivals in Mali, described in the next chapter, can house a broad Malian identity, at once being rooted in authenticity and tradition (e.g. Salif Keita is a modern day *griot*) while at the same time dealing with present conflicts (e.g. The Festival in the Desert and the Tuareg Rebellion). The 'culture' sought by tourists can therefore be highly personal and may even change throughout their time visiting the country.

It is hard to say whether the architecture of Djenné and the consequent lifestyle of its residents denote for tourists a 'performative primitive' (MacCannell, 1992: 26). From interviews with tourists, it seems that their understanding of Djenné is much more sophisticated than simple acceptance of the UNESCO or guidebook rhetoric. People repeatedly reported an uneasiness or anxiety about what was being asked of the town: to remain materially the same in order to retain World Heritage Status. When asked explicitly about the viability of such a project, the majority of tourists interviewed felt that it was untenable and at some point in the future UNESCO would have to rethink its World Heritage project in Djenné. Many found the idea of imposing architectural restrictions on people patronising and wrong, while appreciating that it was in large part the architecture that drew them to Djenné. All the tourists I spoke to seemed keen to take part in what could be described as the 'UNESCO debate' in Djenné. Perhaps the long promised Djenné Museum could become the focus for such a debate, allowing local people and tourists alike to have a forum in which to feedback their views. At the moment, assumptions are made on behalf of tourists (their desire for more sophisticated infrastructure, a regulated tourism industry, a predictable tourist calendar...) while the reality of long term sustainable tourism to Mali may require a different focus.

UNESCO and tourism

The symbiosis between tourism and UNESCO is not as straightforward as it may appear. Although tourists do tend to visit Mali's three main World Heritage sites, and they are the focus of the government's OMATHO efforts, tourists do not do so solely because they have been brought to their attention by UNESCO. For example, the *Tomb of the Askias*, designated a World Heritage site in 2005 by UNESCO, has not yet

been included in many of the tourist circuits. Beck (2006) has found that although World Heritage can act as an international top brand or 'collectible set' for tourists, it is unclear without further research how aware people are that the places they visit are World Heritage. Furthermore, she states that the reliability with which travel guides identify a destination as a World Heritage site is very variable depending on the publisher. I would argue that tourists' awareness of Djenné's World Heritage status is quite high due to the discourse around the protection of the architecture. However, if UNESCO had ignored Djenné, its Mosque, being the biggest mud brick structure in the world, may well have attracted similar numbers of tourists to the town over the years⁸⁵.

Particularly for less familiar tourist destination such as Mali, there is a strong correlation between 'must see' places and World Heritage sites. However, Timbuktu, Djenné and Dogon Country were well known to tourists before their listings and their identities cannot be reduced to their World Heritage status. For example, people would continue to go to Timbuktu due to the renown of its name, with or without the endorsement of UNESCO. Perhaps a study of visitor numbers to the newly declared *Tomb of the Askias* and the Intangible Masterpiece of the *Yaaraal and Degal* (declared in 2006) would allow a more accurate assessment of the effect of UNESCO labelling on tourist numbers.

Tourism in Mali is heavily reliant on infrastructure and repetition, especially before 2005 when most guides did not possess mobile phones. A regular tourist circuit allowed tour companies and guides to negotiate preferential and predictable food and

⁸⁵ The Mosque in its current form however may well have been changed radically if it had not been for the intervention of Alpha Oumar Konaré as early as 1975, opposing a plan to rebuild it using concrete and blue tiles (Personal Communication, Prof Rogier Bedaux 13/05/2008)

accommodation arrangements and meet up with friends and family at prearranged times and places. Speaking with the male Director of a tour company in Bamako, I was told that Djenné was included in nearly all his circuits because its non-inclusion would arouse suspicion amongst tourists. In his view, Djenné is “*Une belle femme sale*” (A beautiful dirty woman). He would prefer not to take his tourists there but is worried about its omission. He compromises by going to Djenné on Monday mornings and then leaving to stay overnight in Mopti, or nearby Sevaré where the hotels are more to European tastes. In some ways, he is dealing with a paradox central to the tourist gaze, the fact that what people gaze upon are often idealized versions of the reality, before and after the event:

What people ‘gaze upon’ are ideal representations of the view in question that they internalize from postcards and guidebooks (and TV programmes and the internet). And even when the object fails to live up to its representation it is the latter which will stay in people’s minds, as what they have really ‘seen’. (Urry, 2002: 78)

By only spending a day in Djenné tourists can capture their experiences, often through photography, while mentally (and literally) airbrushing out the lack of sanitation, the poverty and the begging children. Some tourists explicitly come to Djenné for its photogenic potential. One tourist whose hobby is photography told me that it was very difficult to take photographs in Djenné without elements such as electric wires spoiling the view. The only time he felt that the wires did not detract from his photographs was during the Monday market when there is such a mix of colours, shapes and movement that the wires blend in. The man, who is a French expatriate living in Benin and was travelling through Mali with his wife and two young children, was at once bemoaning the fact that Djenné has been spoilt by

electrification, while being very aware of the poor living conditions of people around him.

Similarly, UNESCO can be accused of suffering from a highly romanticised 'gaze' in relation to Djenné. In an interview with the head of the African Division of the World Heritage Centre in 2005, I brought up the subject of loosening some of the restrictions imposed on Djenné to allow for limited development. I was told that this was unthinkable. Reaching for a postcard that showed an aerial view of Djenné clearly surrounded by water, he told me that it was the 'architectural integrity' of Djenné that made it a World Heritage site. No part of that architecture could be changed without threatening the whole. It is attitudes such as this that have led dissenting voices within the town to ask for UNESCO representatives to come to Djenné and listen to their concerns. Nobody in Djenné would be unwilling to cooperate with UNESCO if they felt that their views were taken into account. However, despite the presence of a UNESCO office in Bamako, in practice all meaningful discussions relating to the town's World Heritage Status happen on a governmental or international level.

Conclusion

Tourist visits to Djenné are motivated by many different factors. In some ways, World Heritage status has the effect of reducing Mali for tourists to a few 'must see' locations on a circuit around the country. The Malian Government's recent attempt to regulate the tourism industry further focuses the tourist gaze away from the general towards more uniform discourse and forms of hosting. However, tourists go beyond this analysis of what is and is not of interest and seek to go further than the material or 'archival' heritage on display by finding strategies to access intangible or 'emotional'

heritage. This may be corporeal, for example, tourists playing football with children on the outskirts of town; or linguistic, through unstructured dialogue with people who take them beyond the usual tourist narrative. In part, these strategies are strategies of distinction and accruing cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984) but they are also about the emotional need of the tourist to gain complicity with their hosts. Moreover, this desire for complicity is not one sided, as many people in Djenné look upon tourists as potential links to the outside world and are therefore very keen to cultivate friendships with them.

Unfortunately, the long term relationship between tourists and *Djennenkés* is often one of broken promises as tourists forget to send the promised photographs, letters and gifts once they have re-entered their real worlds. Some do send gifts and aid to people in the town, with mixed results. For example, the t-shirt making business venture between the Japanese tourist and the guide floundered due to a lack of communication and trust. The guide wanted start up-money and the Japanese tourist wanted a business plan (which the guide was unable to produce) before committing any funds.

Accurate historical knowledge in Djenné is being demanded of the guides for the benefit of an outside audience, the tourists. Regulating history in Djenné is part of a wider government programme to improve the country's tourism industry and to make it come into line with other such industries found throughout the world. It is assumed that tourists have certain standards and expectations that must be met and that the best way to do so is to as much as possible reflect back to them the image of a place they already have in their minds. An accurate historical discourse is seen as important in lending credibility to their experiences. However, as has been discussed, the

credibility sought by tourists may have more to do with emotional authenticity than facts or figures.

In some ways, the historical knowledge demanded of the guides can be juxtaposed with their lay knowledge of the town. Discussing the work of guides in Cusco, McGrath (2005) identifies three types of guides who act as bridges between the tourist, the local people and the site: the official guides who have degrees in tourism or archaeology, the college level guides who put more emphasis on the social aspect of visitor management and communication, and the indigenous guides who have had no formal training but are sometimes employed by tour companies to give local insights to tourist visits. In Djenné, the guides are a mix of all these things. The Cultural Mission guides who accompany the tourists to the archaeological sites are also asked to accompany important visitors and dignitaries around Djenné in favour of the city guides. This is because they are more closely associated with McGrath's first category: the official guide. However, knowledge in Djenné is not just a matter of education or historical accuracy. An indigenous guide may be able to provide tourists with more insights about life in Djenné than his Cultural Mission counterpart, and in doing so, impart the kind of emotional knowledge sought by the tourist. The boundaries of what constitutes an understanding of cultural heritage in Djenné need to be widened to include an understanding of the lives, past and present, of the people who give the town its life.

The *Festival du Djennéry*, discussed in the next chapter, is a case study of how the heritage elite in Djenné came together to plan and run a cultural festival. It brought to light not only the tensions between the various factions in the town but also their assumptions about the expectations of tourists. First and foremost the *Festival du*

Djennéry was devised as an opportunity to raise money from outside funding bodies for the promotion of cultural heritage to paying tourists.

7 Festival du Djennéry

The *Festival du Djennéry*, held in February 2005 presented itself as an opportunity to work with a small group of people on the preparation and execution of a cultural festival in Djenné. I had previously come across many of the organisers in relation to other parts of my research, many of whom I had identified as belonging to the 'heritage elite'. They combined with others who I had not previously met, who worked for the *Mairie* and were consequently part of the political elite of Djenné. I was particularly interested in becoming involved as it was to be the first ever festival to be held in Djenné (apart from a small scale event organised by *Djenné Patrimoine* in 2002 to celebrate the new year⁸⁶). It gave me an opportunity to see how the festival was being conceptualised and executed from beginning to end. It also allowed me to measure the impact on the local community, note participation and examine networks of communication about cultural heritage. Most interestingly, the festival brought together all the different factions within Djenné's heritage landscape, described in the previous chapters. The tension that arose between these factions further illuminates the different kinds of 'heritage knowledges' at work in Djenné, their claims to legitimacy and their potency. Additionally, the festival provided me with a case study of the kind of intangible heritage of increasing interest to UNESCO ('festivals' is one of the sub-categories within the *Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage*).

⁸⁶ The *Djenné Patrimoine* 2002 event included a photographic exhibition, a guided visit of Djenné-Djeno and visits to outlying villages. It also included a '*soirée culturelle*' and a trip on the river by *pirogue* (boat).

When I first heard that there was going to be a festival through Ousmane the embroider, I intended to find out as much as I could about it through interviews with organisers and festival goers. However, after attending a few open meetings, I was asked to join the festival committee as part of the communication team which allowed me to gain access to all the negotiations and compromises first hand. Gradually, I became more involved as more tasks were delegated to me. The difficulty with joining the festival committee was trying to keep some distance from events. At times, I had to give my (what they saw as Western) point of view and I was forced to take sides on certain debates (for example, the entry price), while shying away from getting involved in others (filming permits, as discussed later). The experience ended up being a constant negotiation between my personal involvement in the festival and a desire for it to succeed, while maintaining friendships with those who saw themselves as excluded or aggrieved by its preparation.

Becoming a festival committee member did cause certain problems because I was inevitably identified with the committee's work. Asking me to join the committee was not a big departure from protocol as the precedence of Peace Corps volunteers getting involved in projects was established long ago in Djenné. In fact, a Peace Corps volunteer was also part of the 2005 committee as he was at the time working on the town's sanitation project (discussed in Chapter 3). In the end, I decided that because the festival was of such direct relevance to my research I should participate. People also knew that I was interested in the subject for my research so my presence was expected. However with hindsight, one of the major drawbacks of participation was the fact that the festival turned out to be surrounded by accusations of corruption. It was undoubtedly naïve of me to have believed that a festival would principally mobilise altruistic people who had the town's best interest at heart. What took me by

surprise was the scale and nature of the accusations of corruption and people's impotence (including my own) when confronted with it.

The organisation of the *Festival du Djennéry* began in December 2004, when a few people got together with the intention of holding the event the following February. Although it was at first put forward as a non-political activity, it soon became apparent that the newly elected members of the *Mairie* were behind the project. A number of people connected to the previous administration refused to have anything to do with the festival, and some even tried to put a stop to it. As discussed in Chapter 3, this political affiliation did cloud people's attitudes towards the festival. It is interesting to note that in 2005, the *Mairie's* role in the festival was played down, and even hidden. In 2006, by contrast, the *Mairie* was happy to identify itself as the organiser of the festival. As was the case for the sanitation project, the political dimension of the festival only became clear to me as time went on.

Although behind the scenes the festival was being conceptualised by the organisers as primarily an economic activity, it was presented to the general public as a not for profit venture, a trial run for what was intended to be Djenné's big celebration, the 2006 *Festival du Djennéry* which would mark the 100th anniversary of the building of the Mosque. Looking back on events, it is easy to see that people became involved with the festival to make money, not least because most negotiations in the meetings revolved around money. However, as explored below, the negotiations, although clearly about money in the final analysis, were also about how the money would facilitate the presentation of culture through clothes, hairstyles, performance or craftsmanship. There was genuine enthusiasm and excitement on behalf of the participants because as well as performing to live audiences, the festival was going to

be broadcast on national television (see Schultz 2007a, for a discussion of the success of cultural heritage programmes on Malian television). It is therefore difficult to untangle economic motivation from other forms of motivation. The exchange of money in some guise had become so much a part of every activity I undertook in Djenné that it had almost become invisible to me.

The committee members undoubtedly worked hard and at times, especially as the deadline approached, people pulled together and worked well beyond their specific duties. However, at the end of the festival, we found out that about a third of the money raised was unaccounted for. This left some of the performers and employees unpaid and was a great source of shame for those of us on the committee who had lent the festival credibility through our involvement. The deception came to light gradually, and it was only when a festival was proposed for 2006, nine months after the event, that explicit reference was made in public meetings to the unacceptable behaviour surrounding the 2005 festival. My close involvement with the 2005 festival presented me with documentary evidence of the kind of corruption allegations I had heard associated with most of the other heritage projects coming to Djenné. It led me to conclude that the reason that accusations of corruption were of such note to me was that they symbolised a different kind of 'hidden' knowledge operating at the heart of all negotiations about cultural heritage in Djenné.

This hidden (some would say pragmatic) knowledge is on the one hand, about being able to make claims on behalf of a community you identify strongly with, while at the same time keeping the reality of your life, and the financial demands made on you, at the forefront of your mind. What confused me was the apparent sincerity and pride with which people turned the idea of a festival into reality, while it seemed that some

were deriving illicit economic gain from it. In this context, cultural heritage, like any other project in the town seeking funds from the outside, is a temporary resource. Although the money raised came in the name of all the residents in Djenné, it seems it did not always find its way into the hands of those it was intended for.

Festivals in Mali

On its website, the *Ministère de la Culture du Mali* lists 69 festivals and cultural celebrations supported by the Ministry in 2004. They vary in size from small scale local events to international festivals such as *Essakane*. *Essakane* is widely known internationally as the 'Festival in the Desert'. Officially starting in 2001, a largely Tuareg annual musical gathering has become a world renowned meeting point for world music fans. Its popularity is helped by the fact that it is difficult to get to (the town of Essakane is about 65 kilometres North West of Timbuktu) and therefore retains some of the credentials of 'authenticity' (Lindholm, 2008: 48) much prized by those attending. However, perhaps paradoxically, the festival has become famous through commercialisation due to the presence of international singers such as Ry Cooder and Robert Plant. This commercialisation has greatly raised the profile of Tuareg bands such as *Tinariwen* who have achieved international cult status and now regularly play alongside Western mainstream bands at concerts throughout the world. As described on their website:

The Tinariwen story is already well marinated in startling myths; fierce nomadic desert tribesmen toting guns and guitars, Ghadaffi's poet-soldiers spreading their gospel of freedom throughout the world, turbaned rock'n'roll

troubadours, Stratocaster on one shoulder, Kalashnikov on the other, 17 bullet wounds and rawest desert blues on earth.⁸⁷

Unlike other festivals in Mali, The Festival in the Desert gets wide media coverage in the international press (e.g. Vanity Fair, July 2007 Issue) as it combines music star glamour, romantic images of turbaned men riding through the desert and the slightly dangerous edge, and current affairs credentials, of the aftermath of the 1996 violent conflicts involving the Tuareg and the Malian Government. UNESCO has taken an interest in *Essakane* and in 2006 lent their support to the event through the 'Artists in Development' programme funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The intention is to professionalise the organisers of the festival through a twinning programme with European specialists. The long term aim of the programme is the development of sustainable tourism as the basis for economic growth in Mali.

A second festival in Mali which is increasingly gaining international attention is the 'Festival sur le Niger' held in Ségou. In 2003, Lebanese, German, French and Malian hotel and restaurant owners formed an association named *L'Association des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs pour le Tourisme à Ségou* (AHRTS). They used their expertise and international contacts to launch a very successful music and cultural festival, attracting big name performers such as the singer *Salif Keita*. In 2005, they had also found the funds to build a dedicated walled-off festival area on the banks of the river (in traditional Ségouvian mud brick architectural style) and a large floating stage. The organisers were successful in attracting a high number of Malian ministers whose

⁸⁷ <http://www.tinariwen.com/media.php>

presence lent an element of gravitas to the proceedings (due to their official vehicles and armed guards).

In contrast to the *Festival du Djennéry*, the *Festival sur le Niger* in 2005 had taken a year of careful planning. Despite involving local people, the festival team was dominated by European and Lebanese hotel owners, all experts in local tourism. They had also successfully recruited unpaid students from France to help to run the festival. The success of the Ségou Festival has assured its organisers a regular economic return and since 2005, every hotel in Ségou is fully booked for the duration of the festival (in fact, tour companies block book the hotels up to a year in advance). Additionally, the *Festival sur le Niger* ensures its profit by successfully charging Western prices for entry, 100 Euros per non-Malian visitor for a three day pass⁸⁸.

The widespread media coverage in Mali of festivals such as *Essakane* and the *Festival sur le Niger* undoubtedly had a catalyzing effect on the people organising the *Festival du Djennéry*. Prior to the decision to hold a festival in 2005, the idea of a festival was increasingly seen by groups such as the Cultural Mission, *Djenné Patrimoine* and the *Mairie* as desirable. During the festival preparations, a few disgruntled people from the previous mayor's administration tried to put a stop to it with the justification that it had originally been their idea. This was however dismissed by everyone on the committee who did not consider the idea of a festival as something a person (or administration) could own. As there was no precedent for such an event (apart from the event organised by *Djenné Patrimoine*), the shape and content of the *Festival du Djennéry* emerged gradually, until in its final form it became a hybrid of local

⁸⁸ The entry price is however regarded as too high by many independent guides who chose to avoid the *Festival sur le Niger* in favour of free activities to protect their profit.

performance, the sale of *artisanat* and the annual celebration of the *crépissage* of the Mosque as the central event.

Whose festival?

The first festival meeting was called in December 2004. Some preliminary negotiations must have taken place behind the scenes as there was no debate as to who the President would be and he immediately took his place at the desk at the front of the meeting room, whereas everyone else sat in the audience. The President not only worked for the *Mairie* but is also a member of a powerful *Grande Famille* in Djenné. The meetings were held in the *Maison du Peuple* and at first were open to all. Later, they moved to a smaller office and the people present were there as members of the festival committee or by invitation. The proceedings opened with a proposal to hold the festival from the 19th to the 25th February 2005. Many people in the audience were sceptical that everything needed for a festival could be achieved in such a small amount of time. It also emerged that there was very little money already in place (2 million CFA, £2,000) and that the first priority of the committee would be to raise funds (an estimated 12 million CFA, £12,000, was quoted as a budget).

After some negotiation, it was agreed that the President and his female assistant would go to Bamako to hand out 'letters of support' soliciting money. A further meeting would be needed to identify the people who were going to be targeted by the letters. Next, the different committees were named. Committees were established for: sanitation, *artisanat*, exhibit and events, communication, accommodation, security and transport. Each committee was then free to appoint further members and delegate tasks.

During all the subsequent festival meetings, while issues surrounding budgets were always contentious, a consensus over the content of the festival was very quickly achieved. Without any discussion, the title of the *Festival du Djennéry* was adopted, a term which refers to the town of Djenné and its surrounding villages (as described in Chapter 3). Each night a different ethnic group would perform: Bambara, Bozo, and Peul. There was also to be a Hunter Night and a *Djennenké* night where a few women from each women's association in Djenné were chosen to perform. With the exception of the *Djennenké* and Hunter Nights, the performers were invited from surrounding villages.

The villages that surround Djenné tend to be mono-ethnic and in fact are referred to in such terms to tourists: '*Sénoussa, le village Peul*' (Sénoussa, the Peul village), '*Sirimou, le village Bozo*' (Sirimou, the Bozo village). I was struck by the fact that the festival was conceptualised as a *Djennéry* affair and not a Djenné Festival. All the ethnic groups chosen to perform are adequately represented in Djenné but the performers were invited from the outlying villages. Additionally, the villages seemed to be regarded by the committee as interchangeable so when Sirimou was uncooperative financially they were simply replaced by performers from another Bozo village, Djéra. I was never given an explicit explanation as to why the festival was a *Djennéry* affair although as discussed before the concept of *Djennéry* has deep historical roots. Additionally, the '*troupes de danses*' (dancers) from different villages are famous in Djenné. Djenné in a UNESCO bounded sense therefore perhaps does not exist in *Djennenkés*' minds.

From the outset, the festival both reflected and challenged my perceptions of what constituted cultural heritage in Djenné. It was intended for an outside audience

(tourists) as well as for *Djennenkés*. The parameters of the festival were taken from similar ones found throughout Mali: an evening event and some daytime activity, revolving mostly around the work of artisans and an exhibition. The festival was also going to have an opening ceremony, where dignitaries would be invited to participate and a closing ceremony which would include a prize giving. In the initial stages, there was an ambition to include a conference during the festival with the title '*Djenné: ville classée Patrimoine Mondial, quel avenir?*' (Djenné: a World Heritage site, what future?). The conference was going to be organised by *Djenné Patrimoine* who wanted to invite Malian scholars to put forward their views on the Djenné's cultural heritage. There was however neither the time nor the budget to realise it.

During the festival meetings, it became clear that as well as expectations of long term economic gain, the initiators of the festival thought it could be used as an opportunity to carry out work in Djenné which most people felt should be paid for by the *Mairie* (through the money raised by the tourist tax). Three examples of this were 1) The restoration of the *Tribune* in Djenné as it was used during the opening ceremony 2). A cleaning project covering the whole of Djenné, employing local women's associations and 3) The restoration of the 'Djenné Archway' lying derelict at the entrance of the town. This banco archway had fallen down sometime in the second half of 2004. It was built by the masons of Djenné and was intended to welcome people coming into the town, a symbol of the town's great architecture⁸⁹. It was erected near the Cultural Mission, and was the pride of the masons who built it, the guides who pointed it out to tourists and many *Djennenkés*. However, when it came down to a negotiation of

⁸⁹ During the *Terra 2008* Conference masons from Timbuktu, Ségou, Djenné and Mopti were invited to erect arches in the grounds surrounding the memorial to Mobido Keita for one of the evening celebrations. At the time, one of the Djenné mason remarked to me that they really should be building the arch at the entrance of Djenné but they were unable to find the funding to do so.

who would pay for its repair, people were quick to disassociate themselves from it. It was felt by the festival committee that the archway should be back in place by the time the festival began. However first the *Mairie*, then the Cultural Mission, followed by the masons all declared that they did not have a budget to pay for it. The committee took a decision that any profit left over from the festival could be put towards this good cause. However, there was no money left over and the archway was simply reabsorbed into its surroundings.

Negotiations around the *crépissage* of the Mosque

Within the festival committee, there was an understanding that to attract funding the festival had to refer to the importance of Djenné's cultural heritage and the pride which the festival would bring to the town. A particular event which in many ways embodies this pride is the annual *crépissage* (re-mudding) of the Mosque. Consequently, it was decided that the festival would have to coincide with the *crépissage*. This turned out to be the single most contentious issue between the population and the committee during the festival.

According to the *Chef du Village*, traditionally the *crépissage* of the Mosque took place over a period of a month, at times decided upon by *quartiers* elders in conjunction with local authorities. More recently, the Mosque has been divided up into sections, with each *quartier* responsible for one section, and this has allowed the whole process of *crépissage* to take only a matter of days. Each *quartier* now elects one young man and woman to lead their peers. The young woman is responsible for coordinating the collection of water for the mud and organising the food and the music. The young man is responsible for organising the preparation of the mud and the actual work on the Mosque. Prior to 2005, the *crépissage* usually happened after the tourist season, in

late March or April, depending on the river level. During the festival however, the *crépissage* needed to take place on the 25th February to fit with the festival calendar.

The *crépissage* was undoubtedly the major attraction for tourists at the festival (as previously a date had never been set for the event so far in advance and tourists would only have seen it through serendipity). However, negotiations about the exact date of the *crépissage* brought to light tensions about who or what ultimately decides when it should take place: the Imam, the *Chef du Village*, the Cultural Mission, the Mayor, the *quartiers* elders or climatic conditions. Behind the scenes, difficult discussions took place between the Cultural Mission, the Imam, the *Chef du Village* and the *quartiers* elders, and money changed hands to convince the *quartiers* elders to cooperate. In part, their cooperation was due to the fact that since 2002 1 million CFA (£1000) is given each year towards the *crépissage* by the Cultural Mission. Prior to 2002, money was given informally to different *quartiers* elders. However now the 1 million CFA is given directly to the *Chef du Village* and he distributes it as he sees fit.

Despite the initial tensions, the date, Friday 25th February, was finally agreed upon. A *quartier* meeting on the eve of the *crépissage* was filmed as part of the documentary of the festival made by an ORTM (*Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision du Mali*) television crew. The meeting consisted of about thirty elderly men sitting on mats outside some houses, each making a declaration of support accompanied by a small (now perhaps mostly symbolic) donation. One man wrote each donation down into a notebook. After each man spoke, a younger man dressed in dark blue would repeat it loudly. After a while young men gathered around and I was told that the old men were giving formal notice to the young men whose responsibility it was to make sure the *crépissage* was a success.



Figure 20. Young boys bringing mud on the eve of the *crépissage*

The boys make the journey from the river to the Mosque down the main street.

Due to the water level at the time of the *crépissage* in 2005, holes were dug near the river's edge to speed up the process of fermenting the mud. On the eve of the *crépissage* young boys began to make the journey from the river to the front of the Mosque to deposit the mud (Figure 20). Old men traditionally gather in the Mosque on the morning of the *crépissage* to ensure the success of the event. These old wise men (known as *Albada*) have a special ritual role to play by helping the young men to assemble the ladders they use to climb the Mosque. They use secret knowledge to ensure the ladders don't fall down and no harm comes to the masons working on the Mosque.



Figure 21. The annual *crépissage* of the Great Mosque in Djenné

Only experienced masons may carry out the work on the upper parts of the Mosque.

The actual event of the *crépissage* starts at daybreak and only took a matter of hours (Figure 21). Young men from the different *quartiers* approach the Mosque with music and flags to ensure their presence is noticed (Figure 22). Once they have erected their ladders, the men work together, with younger boys passing up the mud to older, experienced masons⁹⁰. The smaller boys are kept busy mixing the mud with their feet and working on the lowest parts of the Mosque. Each *crépissage* is also an opportunity to renew the sand found inside the Mosque.

⁹⁰ See <http://www.susan-vogel.com/futureofmud.html> for a film about masons in Djenné, including the 2005 *crépissage* of the Great Mosque.



Figure 22. Men from the different quartiers gather for the *crépissage*.

The men announce their arrival with drumming and shouting.

Setting the date for the *crépissage* of the Mosque was part of wider attempt to bring Djenné's biggest cultural asset into line with the needs of tourism. As discussed previously, the OMATHO has for a long time been trying to negotiate tourist entrance to the Mosque which has been officially '*Interdit aux non-Musulmans*' (forbidden to non-Muslim) since an incident involving disrespectful behaviour of white people inside the Mosque in the 1980s. In this case, 'non-Muslim' is most often understood as being synonymous with white people⁹¹.

At the time of the negotiations around setting the date for the *crépissage* of the Mosque, it struck me that I had never been inside the building despite walking past it repeatedly every day. My view of the Mosque remains therefore completely external, I

⁹¹ However many tourists gain access to the Mosque with the help of their guides who bribe the Mosque guard. I chose never to go into the Mosque as I felt that if it were known that I been inside it may have impacted negatively on my relationship with some people in Djenné.

can only imagine the inside from the photographs and descriptions I have seen. In fact, I had long since ceased imagining the inside, as to me, in common with many tourists visiting Djenné, the Mosque is only a façade. Yet the feelings and conceptions of *Djennenkés* towards their Mosque as they walk past are radically different. They can recreate the inside whilst being on the outside. In conversation on the subject, it does not strike *Djennenkés* as contradictory that a monument that has been declared part of the World Heritage of humanity can only be apprehended by a big part of that humanity only superficially. The tension between World Heritage and local heritage is therefore constantly present in Djenné, whether in reference to its houses, access to its archaeological sites or even the hospitality of its monuments.

Organising the Festival

Attracting media interest in the festival was seen as a priority. Two television crews were invited to the festival, the first from the Malian national television channel (ORTM) and the second from the *Centre de Services de Production Audiovisuelle* (CESPA). The ORTM team that were sent had won an award for a documentary about the *Essakane* festival the previous year. CESPA is a UNDP funded initiative to train people in Mali in the use of audiovisual equipment and help support development through education. Despite the need to raise the profile of the festival through television and radio advertising across the country, in 2005 the total advertising and media budget in place was only 115,000 CFA (£115), although to be able to do its job adequately the communication committee felt it needed 2 million CFA (£2000).

The choice of people and organisations approached to solicit money through 'letters of support' provided me with an insight into the way money is seen to flow into the town. The list was arrived at after a brainstorming session involving the whole festival

committee. It was made up of a number of international donors already present in Djenné, as well as businesses and local and national organisations concerned with cultural heritage. In the first few weeks a few responses arrived. The department of *Patrimoine Culturel National* wrote back saying that they had no money with which to help, as did the Dutch Government who expressed support for the idea of the festival but stated they had already given money through the Cultural Mission. The European Union wrote back saying it was too late in their budgetary calendar for them to be able to contribute. Negative responses also came from UNESCO and the Canadian Government. *Ikatel* (the mobile telephone company) and *Nestle* were approached as potential sponsors and *Ikatel* responded positively. The OMATHO released 500,000 CFA (£500) to show their support and the *Association des Ressortissants de Djenné* (a network of *Djennenkés* living away from the town) gave 725,000 CFA (£725). The *Conseil de Cercle* gave 50,000 CFA (£50), the *Mairie* gave 250,000 CFA (£250) and the President's office 500,000 CFA (£500).

However, after initial regular communication about the success of the fundraising effort in the first few weeks of the festival organisation, there was suddenly a lack of communication from the festival treasurer. This was timed with increasing hostility among some of the committee members towards what they saw as excessive expenses during the two fundraising trips to Bamako (735,000 CFA/£735 was claimed for two people for two 5 day trips to Bamako).

Despite repeated attempts on behalf of the committee to get the treasurer to provide receipts for expenses or donations, she simply refused to attend meetings. On the one occasion when she did, she claimed to feel victimised by the vicious rumours she had heard and left after only a few minutes. It was therefore impossible to gain an

accurate picture of the financial success of the fundraising as no receipts were available for the majority of the donations. In the end, it was estimated that approximately a third to half of the money raised was unaccounted for after a few people on the committee got in touch with the donors directly (and calculated the difference between the declared amounts and real amounts). The festival consequently officially made a loss⁹² and many people were left unpaid including the *troupes de danse* from the villages, the women who had been employed as hostesses throughout the festival, the women responsible for cleaning, the ticket sellers, those responsible for lighting and the costs incurred for advertising by *Radio Jamana*.

Through their international networks, the guides were identified as key to mobilizing tourists. However, from the outset there was a tension between Dramane, who was acting as the guides' representative on the committee and a few other committee members. Dramane felt that he had a good understanding of the expectation of tourists and wanted the festival to be more focussed on their needs. Some of the committee organisers however saw the tourists primarily as sources of income and wanted to extract the maximum amount of profit from them in the short window of opportunity represented by the festival. One particularly contentious issue was the setting of the entry price for tickets. The Cultural Mission, who explicitly claimed to be 'heritage professionals' wanted to charge a flat fee of 15,000 CFA (£15) for a four day pass to all tourists regardless on how long they spent in Djenné (to be collected as tourists entered Djenné). The pass would allow them entry into all the evening activities. Dramane and a few other people on the committee argued that it would be

⁹² Officially the festival treasurer declared that the festival had raised 4,605,000 CFA (£4605) from external donors, 544,000 CFA (£544) through the sale of tickets and 147,000 CFA (£147) through the artisan hall, a total of 5,296,000 CFA (£5296) against a hoped for budget of 12,000,000 (£12,000).

more appropriate to have two prices, the four day pass price, and 3000 CFA (£3) for a ticket to a single evening event (sold at the box office).

In the end, the Cultural Mission was convinced to change its mind as most people on the committee realised that tourists coming to Djenné rarely spend more than a day in the town. In the end, less than twenty 15,000 CFA passes were sold as the majority of the seventy or so tourists paying to attend⁹³ the festival chose to buy individual tickets for events. Additionally, the tourists present for the *crépissage* did not necessarily also attend the festival activities. A similar discussion took place when it came to setting the Djennenké entry price, the Cultural Mission pushed for the tickets to cost 500 CFA (£0.50) each, and were finally convinced that *Djennenkés* could not be expected to pay more than 200 CFA (£0.20). The decision meant that the evening activities were well attended by *Djennenkés*.

On the third day of the festival, a disagreement arose between the guides and the Cultural Mission that led to a few guides boycotting the festival performances with their tourists for the rest of the week. The argument arose from the issue of filming permits. During the evening performance (Bozo night) a few tourists who were filming the event were told by one of the employees' from the Cultural Mission that they were not allowed to film unless they bought a permit. Incensed and embarrassed by this, the accompanying guide had a very heated discussion with the Cultural Mission employee, nearly ending in a physical fight between them. Finally, the then Director of the Cultural Mission stopped proceedings to take the microphone at the

⁹³ This figure is based on the declared number of tickets sold. The real number may well have been much higher.

front of the stage and announce that while photography was permitted, filming was not allowed without a permit.

On the following day, an extraordinary meeting of the festival committee was called to discuss filming permits. I chose not to attend to avoid the unavoidable confrontations during the meeting. Despite many people on the committee arguing against permits (as tourists would have already paid once to attend the events) the Cultural Mission got their way and filming permits were printed at £13,000 CFA (£13) each. Not a single permit was sold.

These events were of interest to me as they were further evidence of a cultural heritage hierarchy at work within Djenné. First, the ex-Director of the Cultural Mission had legitimacy through being an agent of the State but also from being a powerful man politically in his own right. He also presented himself as an expert on the value of cultural heritage and its commodification. The guides, however, while actually having quite a sophisticated understanding of the tourists coming to Djenné do not have the power or the legitimacy to influence the Cultural Mission. The Director of the OMATHO and the Director of the local radio station *Radio Jamana*, while both opposing the filming permits and being committee members themselves did not intervene in the Cultural Mission's decision either. Like the ex-Director of the Cultural Mission they were both agents of the State and came from outside Djenné, however they lacked personal political power to gain any influence over decisions.

The majority of the difficulties encountered by the committee in the preparation of the festival were solved through the promise of future money, with a small amount paid in advance. Infrastructural problems, such as transport (e.g. getting the dancers from *Kwakourou* which is 45 kilometres away with no road and very few cars in

Djenné) and sanitation (at the time the sanitation project had only just begun) were dealt with as best as possible given the resources available. Financial negotiations with performers always ended in a compromise. For example, the women's association representative (head of the CAFO in Djenné, *Coordination des Associations et ONG Féminines du Mali*) wanted the committee to provide the money for the clothing and hairdressing of 90 women for the Djenné night. They were convinced to cut the number down to 27, three per *quartier* in Djenné (although there was a lot of discussion about whether Djenné really has 9 or 11 *quartiers* depending on how they are counted, in the end it was decided that there were 10). However, there are 28 women's associations in Djenné and all needed to be represented. Finally, the decision of who to choose was given to the head of the CAFO, who was also a committee member. Similarly, the head of the hunters in Djenné accepted to cut their costs from 500,000 CFA (£500) to 100,000 CFA (£100). The performers were therefore all making an effort in the understanding that the committee was operating with a very small budget. They were however assured that they would share in any eventual profit made by the festival.

Despite having been a committee member myself and having had first hand access to many of the conversations, both formal and informal, during the festival's preparations, I was left feeling that I hadn't really fully grasped what had gone on behind the scenes when trying to understand the corruption that took place. The experience made me aware of the very great limitations of my local knowledge. Even a long time after the 2005 Festival was over, I was still unclear about who had benefitted from the corruption and was sometimes uneasy in conversations with ex-committee members. Anger at the corruption and mismanagement of the festival did

eventually surface, however, people who felt themselves to be aggrieved were powerless to do anything about it beyond complaining.

I suggest that this is because internally in Djenné people have a very sophisticated understanding of political, economic and cultural hierarchies and can adapt this understanding to fit a range of situations. Although the *Festival du Djennery* was an original event, people had been rehearsing their relative positions towards one another in every encounter they had had over the preceding years. Changes that occur in the political landscape in Djenné, such as the arrival of the Cultural Mission, decentralisation, the rise of wealth of *marabouts* or *guides* or the new status of the masons through their international fame, all serve to re-calibrate the existing relationships. They do not however seem to fundamentally alter the power base in Djenné of the *Grandes Familles* who manage to be very well represented politically (e.g. *Chef du Village*, Imam) and now seek to benefit economically from cultural heritage projects coming to the town. Festivals such as *Essakane* and *The Festival sur le Niger* served to highlight the economic potential of festivals to Djenné's heritage elite.

Those people on the outside who did not have control over significant budgets (such as the Director of the OMATHO and the head of *Radio Jamana*) appeared to be powerless during the festival committee discussions. Power in Djenné is therefore twofold: old power derived from family membership facilitating access to positions of influence, and new power which can be financial or political but is generated through national political links or access to significant international budgets. The direction the population's anger took during the 2006 riot, towards old established positions of

power as well as new brokers of wealth in the town (such as the cultural mission) therefore comes as no surprise.

The Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony was a mix of politics and the celebration of Djenné's cultural heritage. Chairs were set out on the raised platform in the main square (*tribune*) and a large tarpaulin provided shade for the invited dignitaries. A banner had been made declaring the opening of the 'Festival du Djennéry 2005'. Drumming was followed by the parading of a group of ten women (Figure 23), each representative of one of the *quartiers* in Djenné. The women were elaborately dressed in white *bazin* (wax cloth), with hairstyles and jewellery revealing their ethnic affiliation (see Schultz, 2007b) for a discussion of the negotiation between traditional dress and women's identities in Mali).



Figure 23. The opening ceremony of the *Festival du Djennéry*

A woman from each *quartier* in Djenné (background dressed in white) was chosen as a representative.

After the women's parade, the audience stood up for the arrival of the *Chef du Village*. In fact, many of the invited dignitaries similarly made an entrance throughout the opening ceremony. Speeches were made on behalf of the Cultural Mission, by the *Préfet*, the Imam, the *sous-Préfets*, the Mayor and the festival President. Representative from the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Artisanat and Tourism were present although no ministers actually came to Djenné until the day of the *crépissage* when the then Minister of Culture made an appearance, going as far as applying some mud to the Mosque himself.

In his speech, the festival President told the story of *Tapama Djennépo* and at the mention of her name, everyone in the crowd cheered. He concluded his speech with the words:

We wish everyone a good stay in Djenné the religious, Djenné the mysterious, cradle of ancient human civilization and the pride of humanity. Long live the Djenné Festival, a prosperous Mali, and a united Africa.⁹⁴

Later, the ten women were once again presented to the crowd in a form of beauty contest with a little explanation given as to their dress and ethnicity. When it was the turn of Fatimata Djennépo, who is regarded in Djenné as a descendent of *Tapama*, the *Chef du Village* rose from his seat and joined her centre stage. He raised her arm in the air to great cheers from the crowd and stood by her side clapping as she danced.

At the end of the ceremony a brand new police car was formally presented to the Mayor by a government representative from Bamako. The car was a symbolic gift to Djenné from the Malian President. It seems that the car had been promised long ago

⁹⁴ My translation.

and that the occasion of the festival was chosen as a fitting event at which to formally hand it over.

The Soirées Culturelles

The *Soirées Culturelles* were held in the *Maison des Jeunes* (a venue traditionally used for plays, musical events and talent shows in Djenné). A small budget of 50,000 CFA (£50) was found to clean and paint the stage. The first night was the '*Nuit des Marionnettes*' (puppet theatre night), representing the Bambara culture. The performers came from a village named *Diabolo* and were paid 100,000 CFA (£100) in expenses. Due to the secrecy of the preparations for their performance, they asked for a high walled area near the stage in which to prepare, so a made makeshift corridor was hastily assembled to protect their privacy. Despite efforts at getting the evening started on time and the successful preparation of the venue (chairs, lighting, hostesses..), there were major technical difficulties every night with the sound system due to problems with the electricity supply.

I will not give a detailed description of each performance throughout the festival, however a few themes emerged from the evenings that were of particular note. First, *Djennenkés* tended to favour the performances in which their own ethnic group was represented, so the Peul night was mostly frequented by Peuls, the Bozo night by Bozos and so on. The Djenné night, on which representatives from all the women's association took part was a unifying event and was the best attended by *Djennenkés*. It also seemed to me to be the most interactive, with women from the audience spontaneously joining in on stage. Many of the women had their youngest children with them on stage and simply handed them to one of their neighbours when they

felt it was their turn to dance. During the Djenné night, the stage acted less as a barrier between the performers and the audience than it seemed to on other nights.

The most 'professional' night was felt by all (tourists and *Djennenkés* alike) to be the Bambara night (see (Arnoldi, 1988) for a discussion of the organisation and meaning of Bamana puppet theatre). This was in part due to the strength of their performance but also to their attitude towards the event. After the night's performances they went out '*en brousse*' (into the countryside) to spend the night going over the parts of their performance they felt still needed improving. The Hunter Night was poorly attended by both *Djennenkés* and tourists. This could have been because of the technical difficulties that meant it started very late but was also due to the very loud noises (repeated gunshots) during the performance that many *Djennenkés* expressed an aversion to. UNESCO has turned its attention to hunters' music and in 2004 launched a programme entitled 'Support for safeguarding traditional music of hunters in Mali' with the aim of publishing an audio CD as well as getting involved in local activities of identification, safeguarding and promotion. However, nobody I spoke to in Djenné was aware of UNESCO's activities in relation to traditional music.

As Arnoldi points out in reference to the Youth Festivals held in Mali, all the performances during the *Festival du Djennéry* were limited and standardized by the time constraints imposed by the festival program and their stage setting (Arnoldi, 2006: 58). It was very clear to tourists attending the events that the performances they witnessed were not adapted specifically for the stage and in fact would have probably have been more enjoyable to them (and felt more 'authentic') had they been experienced in their original village settings.

The Exhibition Hall

The festival committee spent 500,000 CFA (£500) on turning the old OPAM (*Office des Produits Agricoles du Mali*) building in Djenné temporarily into 'la salle des expositions' (the exhibition hall). After much negotiation, each artisan was charged 2500 CFA (£2.50) for a space in the hall for the duration of the festival.

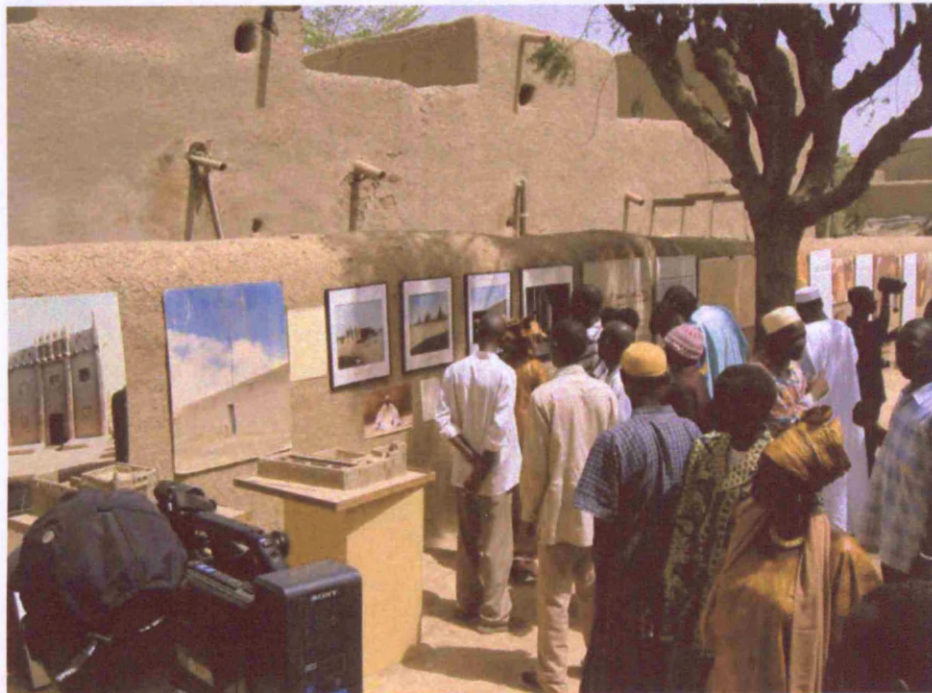


Figure 24. The Cultural Mission exhibition

The exhibition was particularly popular with *Djennenkés*, many of whom had not previously seen the photographs.

The *salle des expositions* was declared open at the end of the opening ceremony and immediately a big crush of people attempted to get through the entrance gates. The hall was divided into the front section for the artisans, and the outside space at the back that housed the Cultural Mission exhibition. The artisans came not only from Djenné but from all over Mali and as far as Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast. This led *Djenné Patrimoine* to complain that a *Festival du Djennéry* should be showcasing the talent of Djenné artisans and to bemoan the fact that ubiquitous Malian tourist art

was for sale. However, the artisans were financially successful due to the high amount of tourists present and the fact that they were all grouped together in one place (without having to pay the guides a commission). *Djennenkés* also visited the artisans enthusiastically but tended not to buy anything as they would be able to source the products (e.g. jewellery) more cheaply from local kinship networks.

The Cultural Mission exhibition made up of photos, explanation panels and replica models of houses on loan from the Cultural Mission museum was a great success, especially with *Djennenkés* (Figure 24). The photographs, showing local masons at work were appealing as they immediately provided people with familiar discussion points. The Cultural Mission is aware of the appeal of their collections as they mounted a photographic exhibition between December 1996 and March 1997 that was seen by an estimated 4000 *Djennenkés*. The exhibition hall therefore made a very strong case for the permanent presence in Djenné of an artisan's hall and a museum in Djenné with photographic exhibitions for all *Djennenkés* to enjoy. However, neither have materialised.

Conclusion

The suspicions of corruption during the 2005 Festival were of particular interest to me. First, they shed light on the reasons why cultural heritage in Djenné has become so contentious as value is often created out of cultural heritage in an illicit and hidden manner. Second, corruption in the domain of cultural heritage is complicated analytically by the discourses of pride and identity that accompanies it. In the final analysis, the *Festival du Djennéry* was primarily an economic resource (like *Essakane* or the Ségou Festival), however it was put forward as a not for profit venture. Whereas *Essakane* is an international music festival, the *Festival du Djennéry* was an intimately

local affair, put together on a local budget using peoples' personal contacts and limited resources.

While maybe expecting corruption to accompany international projects coming to Djenné with large budgets and little local knowledge, I assumed that a locally organised festival would have had its own internal checks and balances (and perhaps it did). Compared to abstract funding from abroad, a significant proportion of the money raised for the festival was from personal sources (for example *L'Association des Ressortissants de Djenné*, *Djenné Patrimoine*, Jean-Louis Bourgeois) yet still no steps were taken to redress the wrongdoings once the extent of the corruption was known.

Working as a member of the festival committee therefore further revealed to me the sources of official and unofficial power in Djenné. It also strengthened my feeling that the promotion of cultural heritage in Djenné often re-enforces divisions between those people in society who can legitimately mobilise money for its promotion, and those for whom the money is intended (directly and indirectly) who remain disenfranchised from the whole process.

Throughout the festival, issues of authenticity were only ever raised by tourists and *Djenné Patrimoine*. Tourists repeatedly asked me (as an anthropologist) whether what they were seeing was authentic. The answer is perhaps that the festival was an authentic representation of how cultural heritage is performed and negotiated in Djenné today. While elements of the festival, such as the *soirées culturelles* took place with very little input from the festival committee, they were performed on stage in front of tourists and filmed for a national television audience. Cultural activities during the festival were altered and influenced by financial intervention (such as setting the date for the *crépissage*) however this in fact represents a form of

continuity, although the balance of power has shifted from the *quartiers elders* to the Cultural Mission and the *Chef du Village*.

The *Festival du Djennéry* took place within the wider framing of Djenné's identity as a World Heritage site. The letters soliciting money for the festival all made mention of the importance of Djenné's cultural heritage and the future *crépissage* of the Mosque in 2006 which would mark its one hundredth anniversary. However, due to the corruption accompanying the 2005 festival, the 2006 festival was a scaled down and largely insignificant event as many of the people who had previously been committee members refused to participate. Therefore, at certain times, there seems to be a tipping point when the power imbalances within Djenné are no longer tolerated. Although the 2006 riot is officially played down as being the result of the activities of a few trouble makers (unsurprisingly the guides, who occupy a difficult space between the town and the outside), I would suggest that it represented a time in Djenné when local political struggles had reached another tipping point and the violence that erupted was a message from those disenfranchised from the wealth coming to Djenné in the name of its cultural heritage, to those repeatedly profiting from it.

Conclusion

On its website, UNESCO showcases a short film about Djenné entitled 'Enchanting Town of Mud'. As the camera winds down narrow streets, the narrator talks about Djenné's architecture and declares that "a unique way of life still exists in Djenné today"⁹⁵. Whereas previously UNESCO did not think of its work in Africa as development work, a change of mood seems to have taken place within the organisation, as was witnessed during the *Terra 2008* Conference in Bamako. Accordingly, one of the conclusions from the conference was that together with first world scientific communities, first world social science communities should think about tackling the issues brought up by living in earthen architecture. The two should work together towards long term sustainable solutions.

However, the term sustainable in Djenné has multiple meanings. For many *Djennenkés* trying to achieve sustainability through the practice of rendering the outside of their houses with fired clay tiles, their focus is on maintaining the originally intended purpose of the house as shelter. For organisations like *Djenné Patrimoine* who are concerned with authenticity and preserving the knowledge of the masons, sustainability would be achieved through a flourishing *barey-ton* and the revival of old techniques, such as the use of *Djenné-Ferey*. Until recently, UNESCO would consider their project in Djenné as sustainable if they could enforce the rule that no material changes are to be made to the town's buildings. Intangible heritage, for example the

⁹⁵ See UNESCO link: Culture/World Heritage/Djenné (downloaded 05/03/2008).
http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=29686&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

work of the artisans, is sustainable if it continues to find a client audience thus ensuring its relevance to subsequent generations of artisans.

In terms of cultural transmission, the recent creation of UNESCO's programme of *Living Human Treasures*,⁹⁶ which has seen the declaration and protection of people considered to be in possession of a high degree of cultural knowledge, is a further step away from the material towards the human actors that give the tangible/intangible heritage its meaning. Within UNESCO, a new focus on intangible heritage and 'heritage landscapes' has allowed the organisation to go beyond Eurocentric conceptions of the primacy of tangible (built) heritage. A discussion of this position can be found in the Getty Conservation Institute's edited volume entitled 'Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage' (Stanley-Price *et al.*, 1996). The volume brings together historical writings from some of the most influential Western thinkers on the value of cultural heritage. For example, John Ruskin (1849: 42):

When we build, let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for present delight, nor for present use alone; let it be such work as our descendents will thank us for, and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come when those stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them...it is their lasting witness against men, in their quiet contrast with the transitional character of all things.

For Ruskin therefore great buildings, like the stones from which they are made, are the only tangible 'witnesses of history'. Riegl (1903), in his famous essay 'The Modern

⁹⁶ See UNESCO link: Culture/Intangible Heritage/ Living World Treasures Programme. <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00061&lg=EN> (downloaded 05/03/2008).

Cult of Monuments', sets out an analytical framework with which to measure age, historical, commemorative and use value of monuments or works of art.

The age value can be perceived through outward signs of decay and incompleteness and contrasts strongly with newly completed pristine works. The work of art or monument is considered organic and suffers the same fate of disintegration as nature imposes on everything else. Age value is therefore radically undermined by outside interference to halt the decay or sudden violent destruction. Age value is considered by Riegl to be universal and to be comprehensible to everyone, whatever their background or level of education.

Historical value is the value the monument has as a representative of human creation at a particular time (e.g. Djenné, a medieval town). It therefore loses historical value through decay as it is in its completeness that it can best be understood. In order to preserve historical value, the most accurate documentation possible must be made of the monument for future generations. Although somewhat in opposition, age and historical value are never truly separable as it is through the categorisation of historical value (Renaissance, Baroque...) that we perceive age value. Commemorative value links both age and historical value with the demands of the present. UNESCO's World Heritage project can be thought of within this category (Riegl, 1903: 78):

Deliberate commemorative value simply makes claims for immortality, an eternal present, an unceasing state of becoming. The disintegrating forces of nature, which work against the fulfillment of this claim, must therefore be fought ardently, their effects paralyzed again and again.

UNESCO's World Heritage in Danger list and the World Monuments Fund's *Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites* are both examples of this constant battle for immortality.

Finally, the use value of a monument refers to the fact that a monument must be kept in a suitable condition to accommodate those within it and not endanger their lives or their health. Use value is indifferent to the other types of value as long as the monument's existence is not threatened (e.g. the use of fired clay tiles in Djenné to ensure the houses do not fall down during the rainy season). Riegl therefore provides an analytical framework with which to think about the competing 'identity discourses' going on in Djenné. From the *Djennenkés*' perspective, the use value of their homes is primary. From UNESCO's perspective the commemorative value (outstanding universal value) of Djenné's architecture and archaeology is of utmost importance. This is not to say that each position is mutually exclusive, simply that different motivating factors are at work.

UNESCO's World Heritage project in Djenné is faced with two great challenges. First, there has been a failure in communication. While UNESCO officials maintain that they only ever work indirectly with World Heritage sites, through the mediation of the state parties (in this case, the Malian Government), people in Djenné want a direct relationship with the organisation. Whether or not this is possible in practice remains to be seen. For many of the reasons discussed throughout this thesis, there is a great deal of mistrust between *Djennenkés* and the Cultural Mission and it is unclear to many *Djennenkés* whether the Cultural Mission is there as a representative of the State or of UNESCO itself. For *Djennenkés* to connect with the town's World Heritage identity, they need to have far more positive experiences with cultural heritage

projects. Second, UNESCO itself is reviewing its position towards the management of historical urban landscapes (see the *Mémorandum de Vienne*, adopted by UNESCO in 2005⁹⁷). A new focus on the amelioration of people's quality of life through cultural heritage projects is changing UNESCO's discussions with state parties and the design and implementation of management plans of World Heritage Sites.

UNESCO's recent focus on intangible heritage is conceptually useful as perhaps Djenné's architectural heritage could be constructively conceived of as intangible cultural heritage, as it is the regular process of *crépissage* that maintains the buildings as viable structures. During an informal interview in 2005, the Director of the Intangible Heritage section at UNESCO spoke about the protection and transmission of cultural heritage through 'enabling spaces'⁹⁸, meaning the promotion of the structures that surround the cultural heritage. In this instance, it is not possible to preserve 'the thing in itself' without supporting the social and economic structures that make it possible. The recent focus of heritage projects in Djenné (such as the Dutch housing restoration project) on the *barey-ton* and the transmission of their embodied knowledge is a step in the right direction. As a discussion of the artisans' practice in Djenné has shown, cultural knowledge is a dynamic force, invested with potency and innovation through transmission. However, this focus is still limited by the fact that it leaves out the inhabitants of the houses. When they do make choices, for example, choosing to cover their houses in clay tiles, they are considered ill informed and their actions are seen as a threat to the integrity of Djenné's cultural heritage.

⁹⁷ UNESCO (2005), Document WHC-05/15.GA/INF.7

⁹⁸ Personal communication, June 2005

The 'use value' of the houses in Djenné must be considered separately from their historic value. A consideration of 'use value' alone would reveal a problem with sanitation, space, ventilation and light. New practical measures must be developed to help those householders failing to meet the regular demands of upkeep on their homes. A vision of Djenné as intangible cultural heritage could also perhaps help break down the divide between the heritage elite and the rest of Djenné's population. If the use value of the buildings becomes the primary focus, then an understanding of the lives of the people within the buildings becomes a priority.

The lessons from intangible heritage

UNESCO's approach to the protection of intangible cultural heritage still operates broadly within a euro-centric conceptualisation of archivization and transmission. However, by coming to an understanding that it is impossible to protect 'the thing in itself' without a thorough appreciation of the 'enabling context' officials at UNESCO are taking a big step towards heritage policy that better encompasses the needs of those whom cultural heritage is also their daily economic responsibility. The case of Djenné is unique not only because of the conditions of extreme poverty encountered in the town but also because it poses a deeper moral question: what standards of living are universally acceptable? If, as many architects assert (Malian and non-Malian alike⁹⁹), living in mud brick houses in Djenné is the best possible adaptation for people given their current circumstances, how can one accommodate the dissenting voices in the town? Should one dismiss the views of those *Djennenkés* who would like

⁹⁹ At the Terra 2008 Conference, a well known Malian architect claimed that *Djennenkés* would be unable to live in bigger homes as they would be lost without their habitual small rooms and narrow staircases.

to 'improve' their homes by using new materials and changing their lay-out and appearance?

In his discussion of the controversy over the preservation of the historic town of Rethemnos in Crete, Herzfeld (1991) documents how many of the residents in the old town resent the State's intervention in decisions over the upkeep of their homes. Too poor to be able to move to the new town, they must abide by the State's vision of historical Rethemnos. Many of the richer residents are able to procure themselves a spacious home in the new town, whilst keeping their links with the old town through the ownership of houses let to tourists. Herzfeld therefore demonstrates how 'monumental time' in Rethemnos is prescribed by the State and how those living within the old town are often powerless to assert their rights to modernity (1991: 6-7):

Soon, people are talking about history in monumental terms, and the awareness of social time - a time defined by both formal relationships and daily interactions - appears to slip away... Monumental time is calibrated in well-defined periods. The bureaucratic measure of history, it is no less *managed* than social time, and its proprieties are no less contingent on access to sources of power; but it has the power to conceal the props of its management and to insist on the rightness of its results.

In Djenné, there is not yet a new town for disgruntled residents to move to (although despite restrictions some homes are being built on the outskirts of Djenné). There is a view expressed by some masons that a 'third' Djenné will eventually emerge and just like the move from Djenné-Djeno to present day Djenné, many residents will decide to move to the more spacious and unregulated land outside the town. This view has to be heavily counterbalanced by the fact that homes on the outskirts of Djenné are

often occupied by newcomers and consequently have a lower status than those homes found in the historic parts of the town. Although some older *Djennenkés* may envisage building a home on the outskirts of Djenné for their sons, none of them seemed able to envisage such a move for themselves.

UNESCO's work with intangible cultural heritage is again useful at this point as it is through the recognition that intangible cultural heritage is something dynamic, efficacious and transmitted from one generation to the next that questions can be asked about the appropriateness of trying to conceptually remove tangible cultural heritage from its social context for protection purposes. Throughout my fieldwork, it became clear to me that people's homes were primarily talked about by their inhabitants as 'places': specific locations within a distinct *quartier* in the town, bounded by other familiar families, landmarks and predictable events (such as the daily return of the cattle, call-to-prayers, noises from the women's market...). Asked to describe their favourite location in the town, the overwhelming majority of residents answered that it was their *quartier* (although some older respondents chose the Mosque). Individual houses in Djenné are therefore part of the rich fabric of the town, and have acquired their meaning through their individual biographies, they cannot usefully be considered as 'monuments' in a reifying sense for *Djennenkés*.

Democratising Heritage

As I have shown throughout this thesis, the 'voices of heritage' that are heard coming out of Djenné are those of the heritage elite, and to a large extent reflect the Western heritage organisations' preconceived views of what is and isn't important in the town. These elite voices have international credibility through being conversant in the 'Authorised Heritage Discourse'. In her study of Stonehenge, Bender (1998) reveals

that labelling anything as heritage is a deeply political act. Similarly, Western heritage organisations are acting politically when they work in Africa and can inadvertently reinforce existing power imbalances within societies. There needs to be a democratisation of cultural heritage within Djenné and a validation of everyone's knowledge, whether it be that of a mason, a mother living through her first rainy season with a newborn child, or a man struggling to pay for the upkeep on the home he has inherited from his father. As Rowlands and Butler (2007: 2) have commented in reference to the current situation in Liberia:

Instead of privileging a dominant heritage, we need a mosaic approach that considers each identity as having an equal knowledge of the other and a tolerance for its place. A pious hope perhaps, since such heritage pluralism assumes that resources available to each are similar in content and form.

All the different forms of 'knowledge' about Djenné's cultural heritage are inextricably linked. However, the case study of the *Festival du Djennéry* shows that although its realisation was dependent on many people's participation, the presentation of Djenné's cultural heritage to the outside world is channelled through existing power structures within the town. Outside intervention does in some cases alter the balance of power (e.g. money from the Cultural Mission for the *crépissage* of the Mosque), however long standing political and economic structures in Djenné are resilient to change.

Djenné's future

As in most other parts of the world, older *Djennenkés* remember a 'golden age' when the town was richer and water more plentiful. The increasing tourism in the town, together with the arrival of satellite television, mobile phones, DVD players, the

internet, motorbikes and all the other accoutrements of modernity have certainly radically changed Djenné over the last twenty years. This radical shift has left many older *Djennenkés* concerned with the behaviour of the younger *Djennenkés* (such as the guides). It is clear that certain events, such as the building of the water-tower, have had an immediate radical effect on the town (through at once freeing women from their daily chore of getting water from the river whilst at the same time causing an acute problem with the accumulation of waste water). However, it is very hard to accurately assess UNESCO's impact on the town since 1988. I would suggest that the inclusion of Djenné on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1988 has had a gradual effect over the years and only now, in the particular political, economic and climatic conditions the town is finding itself in, are many of the underlying tensions resulting from its classification finding a voice. Conversely, this seems to be caused as much by wealth as by poverty, more particularly by the emergence of a widening gap between rich and poor in the town. Conspicuous signs of wealth (e.g. the Imam has three cars, the Cultural Mission staff have use of a car and driver) cause resentment and distrust amongst the wider population. Interestingly, the guides, who are also often conspicuous consumers of status symbols such as mobile phones and motorbikes, do not seem to attract the same degree of hostility from other *Djennenkés*. Instead, as discussed, they are often looked down upon due to their involvement in non-Islamic behaviour (alcohol consumption, inappropriate relationships between men and women, immodest dress...) and their lack of education.

Of most use to further contextualise events in Djenné such as the 2005 riot would be an historical analysis of how the status of political factions in Djenné (the *Chef du Village*, *Grandes Familles*, Imam...) has changed over the years. Then, the influence of newer factions, or factions that have changed in status due to decentralisation such

as the *Préfet*, Mayor and Cultural Mission, could be better understood. As the situation currently stands, it seems that Djenné's World Heritage Status is seen positively by all the 'heritage elite' in Djenné, with perhaps the exception of the Imam and his followers, who would put more emphasis on Djenné's Islamic rather than architectural heritage. It is hard to come to a definitive conclusion about the feeling of the majority of *Djennenkés* towards their World Heritage status as many of them have very limited information on the subject, and are therefore not in a position to judge the long term economic benefits of the classification. What does seem to be the case is that very practical economic factors are at the heart of any judgement about UNESCO classification. 'Softer' benefits such as prestige are secondary considerations due to the severe economic and climatic conditions found in the town.

Djenné seems to be in need of a more democratic discourse about its cultural heritage. As UNESCO state in 'Our Creative Diversity'(WCCD, 1996: 4):

Finally, freedom is central to culture, and in particular the freedom to decide what we have reason to value, and what lives we have reason to seek. One of the most basic needs is to be left free to define our own basic needs .

Due to its World Heritage Status, one of *Djennenkés*' most basic needs, the need for shelter, is being defined by officials outside the town. The question therefore needs to be asked: on what scale is freedom being talked about? Is it the freedom of the individual? A majority voice within the town? The National Government? An international organisation like UNESCO claiming to act for the good of the heritage of 'humanity'? Would de-classifying Djenné allow *Djennenkés* a greater degree of freedom?

Although this measure does not seem likely in the near future, especially due to UNESCO's recent investment in a new 'management plan' for the town, Djenné could still potentially lose its World Heritage status if more and more houses are covered in tiles, drastically changing the town's appearance. I would suggest that a more constructive approach would be to open up a dialogue between UNESCO, the National Government and *Djennenkés*, where the original classification criteria could be re-thought in light of the new economic and social conditions faced by people today.

At the same time, an essential part of the democratisation of cultural heritage could be established by finding mechanisms through which to feed back the income from heritage tourism into the local economy. An obvious starting point would be the ring-fencing of the tourist tax to pay for local initiatives such as planting, fishing and herding cooperatives. Despite alleged local corruption, heritage organisation could make greater transparency a condition of working in the town.

In terms of education, the archaeological objects found at Djenné-Djeno, some of which are now on display in the National Museum, could become part of a travelling exhibition to Djenné (physically or through the medium of photographs). Guides in Djenné should positively be encouraged to find out more about Djenné-Djeno in the hope that their knowledge will be passed on to others in the town. UNESCO's concept of World Heritage could be communicated to people in Djenné through an exhibition of photographs of other world heritage sites found throughout the world. This measure would at least give *Djennenkés* the impression that UNESCO was willing to enter into a conversation with them about the wider meaning of the town's identity

and create a sense of solidarity with other World Heritage sites found throughout the world.

In a focus group with *Djennenkés* on the subject of Djenné's World Heritage status, one man expressed his impotent rage at what he saw as the unacceptable living conditions in Djenné: "*On est là dans nos nids de rats.*"¹⁰⁰ ("We are here in our rats' nests."), while he perceived that other towns such as Mopti, free of restrictions, were evolving and changing in the right direction. For *Djennenkés* to believe in the future of their town as a World Heritage site, they need to see their cultural heritage working for them in an efficacious way, contributing to a better collective future.

UNESCO's World Heritage project in Africa has successfully moved attention away from a discourse that defines Africa as a continent beset by poverty and corruption. It is a way of celebrating Africa's rich history and cultural heritage and a successful means of promoting tourism. The success of Africa 2009 has seen the launch of a new programme, Africa 2017, continuing the work of training heritage professionals and protecting built heritage. Yet poverty and corruption still exist and people's lives still need improving. In their approach to the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, UNESCO seem to place the human actors involved on a scale, from detached to absolute embodiment, from a World Heritage site to a Living Human Treasure. In the final analysis however, any discussion of the importance of cultural heritage in Djenné must begin with an understanding of the conditions in which people live their lives. This cannot be merely academic, reduced to facts and figures

¹⁰⁰ Personal Communication, December 2005

about life expectancy and educational outcomes. Cultural heritage in Djenné should not be a burden but redemptive:

The little weighing boy just came round (he makes money by charging people 1 pence to stand on some broken bathroom scales). The poor little thing has epilepsy and A explained how at school all the students got together to pay for his healthcare treatment. It seems that this boy's treatment has run out and now he is having the fits again as it is the summer holiday...People in the streets ask if I am a doctor. In every family that I have seen in the last few weeks there is someone suffering or dying. It's hard because so many of them are children. A explained that the weighing boy's father makes terracotta tiles and his mother threads beads to make bracelets. Everyone is so desperately poor at the moment that they won't be buying either of those things. The tourist season is awaited like the one big hope. After the failed rains and the locusts the tourist season simply has to work. And there are still two months to wait.¹⁰¹

Heritage ethnographies

When deciding to undertake a heritage ethnography in Djenné, my ambition was to contextualise the town's cultural heritage within the wider economic, political and social realities found in Djenné. Through this approach, I hoped to show a certain 'heritage logic' within the town. For example, the embodied practice of artisans (constantly evolving, improving and developing new designs) is a useful counter-balance to an approach to cultural heritage that hopes to 'freeze' architecture in time and space. Another example is how the historic discourse used by guides ('the art of

¹⁰¹ Research diary entry, 10th September 2005.

speaking') is a long way from the historical accuracy demanded by the national guide tests.

What seems to have developed in Djenné is therefore a very strategic attitude towards cultural heritage, and the imaginative use of cultural heritage as a resource to improve the economic lives of *Djennenkés*. Where cultural heritage becomes burdensome (such as the cost of the upkeep of houses), new strategies are devised to try and circumvent problems. Within the 'heritage logic' of Djenné, these new strategies (such as tiling houses) cannot be dismissed as uneducated and short-termist reactions. Instead, they fit within a wider strategy to ensure that a family has access to a more reliable form of shelter and can afford to eat. If it is to be successful, an international organisation such as UNESCO, even acting through a State Party, cannot remove itself from the different 'heritage logics' found throughout the world.

Two broad conclusions therefore emerge from the thesis research. First, it is not appropriate to divorce attempts to protect cultural heritage from considerations of development and poverty alleviation. In cases such as Djenné, the potential income from tourism must be balanced against the economic burden presented by the protection of a particular vernacular architectural tradition. In a situation where it is often difficult to ensure that people have enough to eat or have access to healthcare, what is at stake are peoples' lives.

Second, the successful protection of cultural heritage requires a much deeper dialogue between heritage professionals and local constituents, one which starts with an understanding of people's everyday lives and concerns. Throughout this thesis, and building on the work of Smith (2006), I have argued that heritage professionals, such as those employed by UNESCO, operate within a very specific institutional culture

which can be studied historically. Only through the theorisation of this institutional culture as one of many 'heritage logics' (albeit an extremely powerful one), can room be made for an engaged debate about the importance of cultural heritage in people's lives. As this theorisation evolves, and organisations such as UNESCO continue to re-think their approach to their mandate, a democratisation of different visions of cultural heritage would ensure that the work of heritage professionals becomes increasingly relevant and dynamic.

Butler (2007: 272) states that Euro-North American museum and heritage culture has for a long time failed to come to terms with different world views:

My point has been that museum and heritage culture, like Narcissus looking into his pool (as a 'world in itself'), still fails to engage in alternative conceptualisations of itself within a wider global context... Moreover, Euro-North American core values continue to function as museology's resource for its own legitimation, and, crucially, for its professionalism and expert culture. I have demonstrated that as a consequence there has been a failure, in particular, to imagine 'non-Western' landscapes/cultural influences other than as stereotypes and thus to give a reality to their history and humanity.

Through detailed case studies and life histories, heritage ethnographies can further problematise the dominant heritage discourse. The theoretical objections to a dominant Western approach to cultural heritage are already present in the literature (Konaré, 2000; Olaniyan, 2003; Turtinen, 2000) however, a detailed ethnographic approach to the question can provide vital clues to what an alternative (non-Western) heritage landscape may look like. Fieldwork in Djenné has shown that many concepts such as 'authenticity' and 'cultural transmission' are not stable entities. For example,

authenticity amongst the jewellers in Djenné is not about the reproduction of a stable prototype but about the materials and skills used to produce the object. Additionally, cultural transmission occurs as much through ‘improving’ an object for modern day use as it does through ensuring that old designs are not lost.

In fact, as Herzfeld (1991) has revealed, this re-theorisation of the role of cultural heritage in peoples’ lives is not only applicable to non-Western heritage landscapes, but instead serves to reveal a subaltern, alternative or more democratic appreciation of what people find meaningful in their lives. In Herzfeld’s ethnography, as in the case of Djenné, it is people’s homes that become the domain of contestation between heritage professionals and local people. And, as in the case of Djenné, Herzfeld argues that people express themselves through their homes in a great number of complex ways that are intimately linked to ideas of hospitality, prestige, modernity and economic rationality.

Ethnographic studies of the consequences of cultural heritage practice in Africa are present in the literature (e.g. Basu, 2007; De Jong, 2007; Fontein, 2000; Schultz, 2007a). This thesis seeks to complement this body work by critically engaging with the study of grass-root strategies to manage cultural heritage and the interest this heritage brings from the outside world. It is not an attempt to create an opposition between a Western heritage discourse and a local level reality, instead to use ethnographic fieldwork to reveal where the different discourses meet, the consequences of these encounters and the way in which lessons from them can be used to improve the practice of heritage professionals, primarily through a more inclusive approach to the protection of cultural heritage.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Imams of the Great Mosque in Djenné

List compiled by the Mosque Committee established in Djenné in 2007.

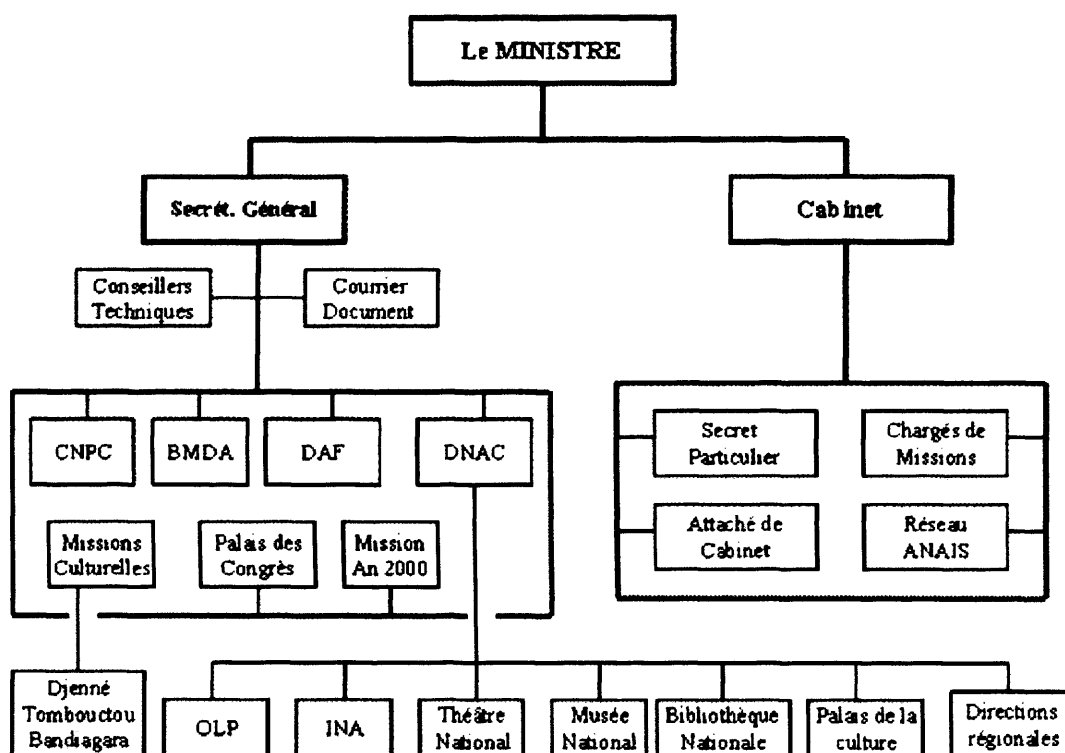
1907- 1918	Baber Tawati	
1918- 1922	Sofia Gomed	
1922- 1932	Mahamane Tinank	
1932-1942	Alphamoye Djeité	
1932-1945	Mahamane Nafogou	
1945-1958	Alphamoye Tenentao	
1958-1992	Samoye Korobara	(father of current Imam)
1992-1993	Bakamia Djeité	(died suddenly)
1993-1994	Mamadou Traoré	(died suddenly)
1994-	Alman Korobara	

Appendix 2: *Chefs du Village*

List compiled by the Mosque Committee established in Djenné in 2007 (no dates available to show when the *Chefs du Village* held their posts).

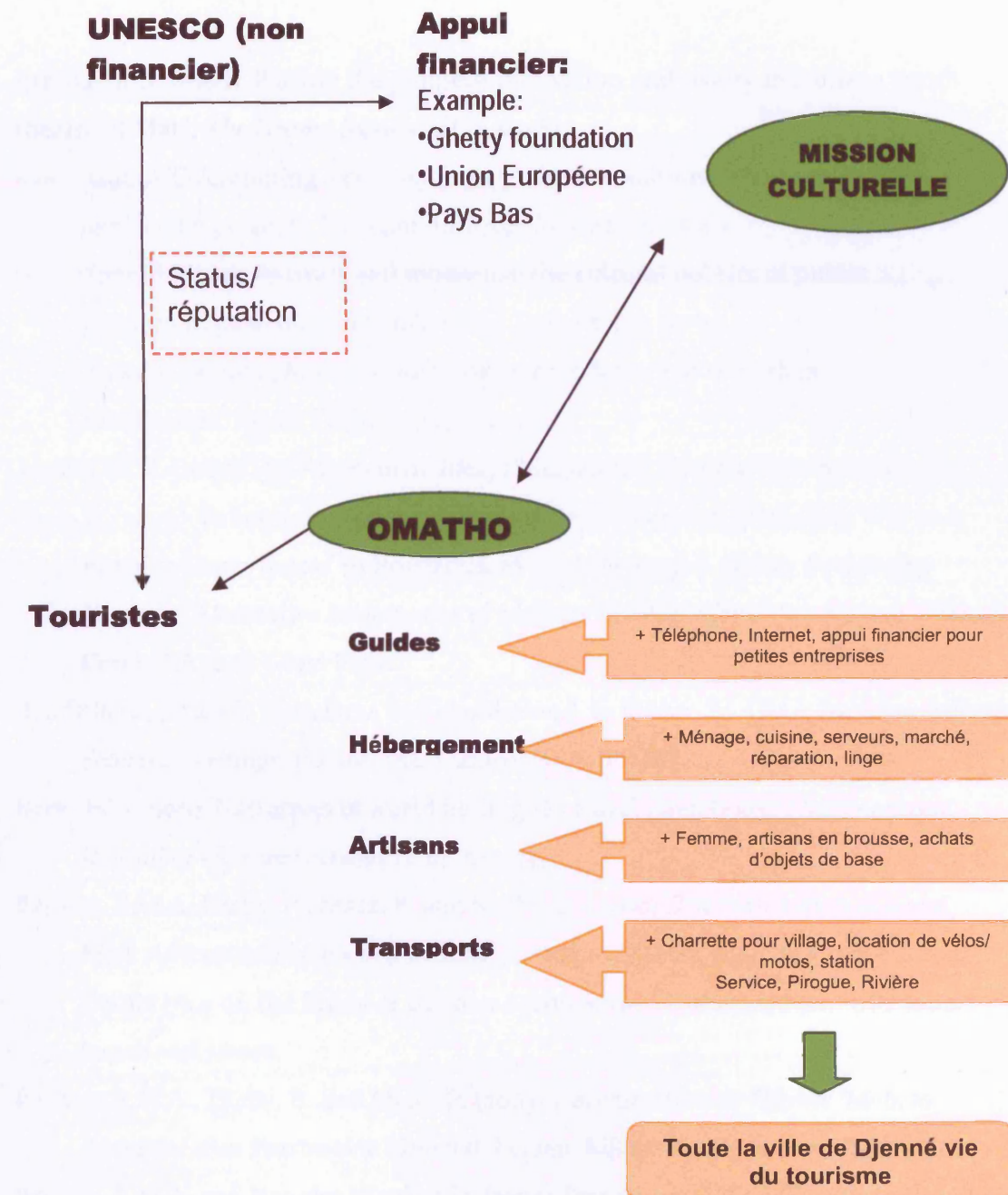
1. Aimame Siaka Traoré (1st *Chef du Village*, daughter married a Maiga)
2. Bassoumaïla Maiga
3. Bahasseye Maiga
4. Sékou Hassan Maiga
5. Aba Sonmayla Maiga
6. Bahasseye Alhadi Maiga
7. Aba Sékou Maiga (Aba Sékou had a dispute with the *Commandant de Cercle*. The *Chef du Village* position was passed on to another family).
- Salmoye Baber Traoré (Died before he took office)
8. Sory Demba Cissé (Relative of Maiga)
9. Nyemy Maiga
10. Bahasseye Sékou Maiga (Current *Chef du Village*)

Appendix 3: Ministry of Culture *Organigram*



Appendix 4: Impact of tourism diagram

Referred to



References

- Arnoldi, M.J. (1988) 'Playing the puppets: innovation and rivalry in Bamana youth theatre of Mali', *The Drama Review* 32(2), 65-82.
- (1999) 'Overcoming a colonial legacy: the new national museum in Mali: 1976 to the present', *Museum Anthropology* 22(3), 28-40.
- (2006) 'Youth festivals and museums: the cultural politics of public memory in postcolonial Mali', *Africa Today* 52(4), 55-75.
- (2007) 'Bamako, Mali: monuments and modernity in the urban imagination' *Africa Today*, 54(2), 3-24.
- Asante, M.K. (1987) *The Afrocentric Idea*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Basu, P. (2007) 'Palimpsest Memoryscapes: Materializing and Mediating War and Peace in Sierra Leone' In Rowlands, M. and De Jong, F. (Eds.), *Reclaiming Heritage: Alternative Imaginaries of Memory in West Africa*. pp. 231-259. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (1988) 'Simulacra and simulations', In Poster, M. (Ed.), *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*. pp. 166-184. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Beck, W. (2006) 'Narratives of world heritage in travel guidebooks', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 12(6), 521-535.
- Bedaux, R.M.A, Diaby, P., Maas, P. and Sidibé, S. (2000) *The restoration of Jenné, Mali: African aesthetics and western paradigms*, Terra 2000: 8th International Conference on the Study of Earthen Architecture, Torbay, Devon, UK, 2000. James and James.
- Bedaux, R.M.A., Diaby, B. and Maas, P. (2003) *L'architecture de Djenné, Mali: la Pérennité d'un Patrimoine Mondial*, Leiden: Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde.
- Bedaux, R.M.A. and Van der Waals, J.D. (1994) *Djenné: une Ville Millénaire au Mali*, Leiden: Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde.
- Bender, B. (1998) *Stonehenge: Making Space*, Oxford, New York: Berg.
- Blake, J. (2000) 'On defining the cultural heritage', *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 49(1), 61-85.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, London:

Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Bourgeois, J.-L. (1987) 'The history of the great Mosques of Djenné', *African Arts* 20(3), 54-63+90-92.

----- (1989) *Spectacular Vernacular: The Adobe Tradition*, New York: Aperture Foundation.

Brenner, L. and Robinson, D. (1980) 'Project for the conservation of Malian Arabic manuscripts', *History in Africa* 7, 329-332.

Brunet-Jailly, J. (1999) *Djenné D'Hier à Demain*, Bamako: Editions Donniya

Butler, B. (2006) 'Heritage and the present past' In Tilley, C., Keane, W., Küchler, S., Rowlands, M. and Spyer, P. (Eds.), *Handbook of Material Culture*. pp. 463-479. London, Thousand Oaks, New Dehli: Sage.

Butler, B. (2007) *Return to Alexandria : an Ethnography of Cultural Heritage Revivalism and Museum Memory*, Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.

Caillié, R.T. (1830) *Travels through Central Africa to Timbuctoo; and across the Great Desert, to Morocco, Performed in the Years 1824-1828*, London: Colburn & Bentley.

Clauzel, J. (1989) *Administrateur de la France d'Outre-mer*, Marseille and Avignon: Jeanne Laffitte and A. Barthélemy.

Cleere, H. (2001) 'The world heritage convention in the third world', In Layton, R., Thomas, J., and Stone, P.G. (Eds.), *Destruction and Conservation of Cultural Property*. pp. 99-105. London, New York: Routledge.

Clément, E. (1995) 'A view from UNESCO', *African Arts* 28(4), 58.

Cohen, E. (1988) 'Traditions in the qualitative sociology of tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research* 15(1), 29-46.

De Jong, A.A. and Harts-Broekhuis, J.A. (1985) *Investigations Socio Economiques de la Ville de Djenné et ses Environs, Rapport 7*. Institut de Géographie, Université d'Utrecht.

De Jong, F. (2007) 'A Masterpiece of Masquerading: Contradictions of Conservation in Intangible Heritage' in Rowlands, M. and De Jong, F. (Eds.) *Reclaiming Heritage: Alternative Imaginaries of Memory in West Africa*, Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.

- De Jong, F. and Rowlands, M., eds (2007) *Reclaiming Heritage: Alternative Imaginaries of Memory in West Africa*, pp 161-184. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.
- De Jorio, R. (2003) 'Narratives of the nation and democracy in Mali: a view from Modibo Keita's memorial', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 172, 827-855.
- (2006) 'Politics of remembering and forgetting: the struggle over colonial monuments in Mali', *Africa Today* 52(4), 78-106.
- Derrida, J. (1996) *Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Desplagnes, L. (1907) *Le Plateau Central Nigérien: une Mission Archéologique et Ethnographique au Soudan français*, Paris: Emile Larose.
- Diaby, B. (2000) 'Fixed and moveable heritage in Jenné: problems of conservation and protection', In Ardouin, C.D. and Arinze, E. (Eds.), *Museums and History in West Africa*. pp. 22 -28. Oxford: James Curry.
- Diakité, D. (1999) 'L'Islam à Djenné', In Brunet-Jailly, J. (Ed.), *Djenné D'Hier à Demain*. pp. 45-59. Bamako: Editions Donniya.
- Dutt, S. (1995) *The Politicization of the United Nations Specialist Agencies: a Case Study of UNESCO*, Lewiston: Mellen University Press.
- Epskamp, K. (2002) 'World heritage: bilateral co-operation between the Netherlands and Mali', *Boekmancahier*, Vol.14, No.54, pp.433-445
- Eribon, D. (1988) 'Levi-Strauss interviewed, Part I', *Anthropology Today* 4(5), 5-8.
- Eriksen, T.H. (2001) 'Between universalism and relativism: a critique of UNESCO's concept of culture', In Cowan, J.K., Dembour, M.-B., and Wilson, R.A. (Eds.), *Culture and Rights: Anthropological Perspectives*. pp. 127-148. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fanon, F. (1961) *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Weidenfeld.
- Ferguson, J. (2006) *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Finn, C.E. (1986) 'The rationale for American withdrawal', *Comparative Education Review* 30(1), 140 - 147.
- Fontein, J. (2000) *UNESCO, Heritage and Africa: an Anthropological Critique of World Heritage*, Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh University.
- Forty, A. and Küchler, S., eds (1999) *The Art of Forgetting*, Oxford: Berg.
- Gallais, J. (1967) *Le Delta Intérieur du Niger et ses Bordures: Etudes Morphologiques*,

- Paris: CNRS.
- (1994) 'Les hommes dans leur milieu naturel', In Bedaux, R. and Van der Waals, J.D. (Eds.), *Djenné: Une Ville Millénaire au Mali*. Leiden: Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde.
- Gardi, B. (1994) 'Djenné at the turn of the century: postcards from the Museum für Völkerkunde Basel', *African Arts* 27(2), 70-75+95-96.
- Gardi, B., Maas, P. and Mommersteeg, G. (1995) *Djenné - Il y a Cent Ans*, Amsterdam: Karthala.
- Graham, B.J., Ashworth, G.J. and Tunbridge, J.E. (2000) *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture, and Economy*, London: Arnold.
- Greenfield, J. (1995) *The Return of Cultural Treasures. 2nd Ed*: Cambridge University Press.
- Hall, S. (2005) 'Whose heritage? Unsettling the heritage, re-imagining the postnation', In Littler, J. and Naidoo, R. (Eds.), *The Politics of Heritage: the Legacies of 'Race'*. pp. 23-35. London: Routledge.
- Herzfeld, M (1991) *A Place in History: Social and Monumental Time in a Cretan Town*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Hitchcock, M. (2005) 'Afterword', In Harrison, D. and Hitchcock, M. (Eds.), *The Politics of World Heritage: Negotiating Tourism and Conservation*. Clevedon, New York: Channel View Publication.
- Hobsbawm, E.J. and Ranger, T.O., eds (1983) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hooper-Greenhill, E. (1992) *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, London: Routledge.
- Howard, P. (2003) *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity*, London: Continuum.
- HRP (1908) 'Review: le plateau central Nigérien by Lieutenant Louis Desplagnes', *Man* 8, 106-107.
- Hudgens, J. and Trillo, R. (1999) *West Africa: the Rough Guide*, London: Rough Guides.
- Imber, M. (1989) *The USA, ILO, UNESCO and the IAEA: Politicization and Withdrawal in the Specialized Agencies*, Basingstoke and London: Macmillan.
- Imperato, P.J. (1989) *Mali: A Search for Direction*, Dartmouth: Westview Press.

- Jansen, J. and Austen, R. (1996) 'History, oral transmission and structure in Ibn Khaldun's chronology of Mali rulers', *History in Africa* 23, 17-28.
- Jansen, J., Duintjer, E. and Tamboura, B. (1995) *L'épopée de Sunjara, d'après Lansine Diabate de Kela*, Leiden: CNWS.
- Joy, C. (2007) 'Enchanting Town of Mud: Djenné a World Heritage site in Mali', In Rowlands, M. and De Jong, F. (Eds.), *Reclaiming Heritage: Alternative Imaginaries of Memory in West Africa*. pp. 145-160. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Joyner, C.C. (1986) 'Legal implications of the concept of the common heritage of mankind', *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 35(1), 190-199.
- Kaplan, F. (1994) *Museums and the Making of Ourselves*, Leicester University Press.
- Konaré, A. (1995) 'Towards more efficient international collaboration', *African Arts* 28(4), 27-31.
- Konaré, A.B. (2000) 'Perspectives on history and culture: the case of Mali', In Robinson, D., Bingen, R., J; , and Staatz, J.M. (Eds.), *Democracy and Development in Mali*. pp. 15-22. East Lansing: Michigan State University.
- Kwint, M., Breward, C. and Aynsley, J., eds (1999) *Material Memories*, Oxford: Berg.
- La Violette, A. (2000) *Ethno-Archaeology in Jenné, Mali: Craft and Status among Smiths, Potters and Masons*, Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Lange, K.E. (2001) 'Djenné, West Africa's eternal city', *National Geographic* June.
- Le Vine, V. (2007) 'Mali: accommodation or coexistence?' In Miles, W.S.F. (Ed.), *Political Islam in West Africa: State Society Relations Transformed*. pp. 73-99. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Leiris, M. (1934) *L'Afrique Fantôme*, Paris: Librairie Gallimard.
- Leprun, S. (1988) *Le Théâtre des Colonies: Scénographie, Acteurs et Discours de l'Imaginaire dans les Expositions 1855-1937*, Paris: Editions L'Harmattan.
- Lindholm, C. (2008) *Culture and Authenticity*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Lowental, D. (1998) *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*: Cambridge University Press.
- Maas, P. and Mommersteeg, G. (1992) *Djenné: Chef-d'Oeuvre Architectural*, Bamako and Amsterdam: Institut des Sciences Humaines and Institut Royal des Tropiques.
- MacCannell, D. (1973) *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, London:

Macmillan.

MacCannell, D. (1992) *Empty Meeting Grounds: the Tourist Papers*, London: Routledge.

Magness-Gardiner, B. (2004) 'International conventions and cultural heritage protection', In Rowan, Y. and Baram, U. (Eds.), *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past*. pp. 27-41. Oxford: AltaMira Press.

Manhart, C. (2001) 'The Afghan cultural heritage crisis: UNESCO's response to the destruction of statues in Afghanistan', *American Journal of Archaeology* 105(3), 387-388.

Marchand, T. (2001) 'Process over product: case studies of traditional building practices in Djenné, Mali and San'a', Yemen', *Managing Change: Sustainable Approaches to the Conservation of the Built Environment: 4th Annual US/ICOMOS International Symposium*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 2001, pp. 137-159. Getty Conservation Institute.

----- (2003) 'A possible explanation for the lack of explanation; or, 'why the master builder can't explain what he knows': introducing informational atomism against a 'definitional' definition of concepts', In Pottier, J., Bicker, A., and Sillitoe, P. (Eds.), *Negotiating Local Knowledge: Power and Identity in Development*. London; Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press.

----- (2006) 'Endorsing indigenous knowledge: the role of masons and apprenticeship in sustaining vernacular architecture - the case of Djenné ', In Asquith, L. and Vellinga, M. (Eds.), *Vernacular Architecture in the Twenty-First Century*. pp. 46-62. New York: Taylor & Francis.

McGrath, G. (2005) 'Including the outsider: the contribution of guides to integrated heritage tourism management in Cusco, Southern Peru', In Harrison, D. and Hitchcock, M. (Eds.), *The Politics of World Heritage: negotiating tourism and conservation*. pp. 146-152. Clevedon: Channel View Publication.

McIntosh, R.J. (1998) *The peoples of the Middle Niger: the Island of Gold*, London: Blackwell.

McIntosh, R.J. (2005) *Ancient Middle Niger: Urbanism and the Self-Organizing Landscape*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McIntosh, R.J., Togola, T. and McIntosh, S.K. (1995) 'The good collector and the premise of mutual respect among nations', *African Arts* 28(4), 60-69+110-112.

- Meskel, L. (2002) 'Negative heritage and past mastering in archaeology', *Anthropological Quarterly* 75(3), 557-574.
- Miller, D. (1997) 'Consumption and its consequences', In Mackay, H. (Ed.), *Consumption and Everyday Life*. pp. 13-64. London: Sage.
- Mommersteeg, G. (2000) 'Le domaine du Marabout: maitres coraniques et spécialistes magico-religieux a Djenné, Mali', *Djenné Patrimoine* Numéro 8.
- Monteil, C. (1932) *Une Cité Soudanaise: Djenné Métropole du Delta Central du Niger*, Paris: Société D'Editions Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales.
- Morton, P. (2000) *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition*, Paris, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Mosse, D. (2006) 'Anti-social anthropology? Objectivity, objection, and the ethnography of public policy and professional communities', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12, 935-956.
- Nash, D. (1996) *Anthropology of Tourism*, Oxford: Pergamon.
- Niec, H., ed (1998) *Cultural Rights and Wrongs*: UNESCO Publishing.
- Nora, P. (1989) 'Between memory and history: les lieux de mémoire', *Representations* 26, 7-24.
- O'Keefe, P.J. (2004) 'World cultural heritage: obligations to the international community', *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 53(1), 189-209.
- Olaniyan, T. (2003) 'What is 'cultural patrimony'? In Afolabi, N. (Ed.), *Marvels of the African World: African Cultural Patrimony, New World Connections and Identities*. pp. 23-35. Trenton & Eritrea: Africa World Press.
- Oxby, C. (1996) 'Tuareg identity crisis', *Anthropology Today* 12(5), 21.
- Panella, C. (2002) *Les Terres Cuites de la Discorde*, Leiden: CNWS.
- Park, M. and Miller, R. (1907) *Travels of Mungo Park*, London: Dent.
- Phillips, M.S. (2004) 'What is tradition when it is not 'invented'? A historiographical introduction', In Phillips, M.S. and Schochet, G. (Eds.), *Questions of Tradition*. pp. 3 - 29. University of Toronto Press.
- Phillips, R.B. and Steiner, C.B., eds (1999) *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, London: University of California Press.
- Pottier, J. (2003) 'Negotiating local knowledge: an introduction', In Pottier, J., Bicker, A., and Sillitoe, P. (Eds.), *Negotiating Local Knowledge: Power, Identity and Development*. London: Pluto Press.

- Prussin, L. (1994) 'Vérité et imaginaire de l'architecture', In Bedaux, R. and Van der Waals, J.D. (Eds.), *Djenné: Une Ville Millénaire au Mali*. pp. 102-111. Leiden: Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde.
- Radstone, S., ed (2000) *Memory and Methodology*, Oxford, New York: BERG.
- Ravenhill, P. (1995) 'Beyond reaction and denunciation: appropriate action to the crisis of archaeological pillage', *African Arts* 28(4), 56-57+110.
- Renfrew, C. (2000) *Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Riegl, A. (1903) 'The modern cult of monuments: its essence and its development ', reprinted in Stanley Price, N., Talley, M.K., and Melucco Vaccaro, A. (Eds.), *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage* (1996) pp. 69 -83. Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute.
- Robinson, D. (2000) "French Africans" - Faidherbe, Archinard, and Coppolani: the 'creators' of Senegal, Soudan and Mauritania ', In Robinson, D., Bingen, R.J., and Staatz, J.M. (Eds.), *Democracy and Development in Mali* pp. 22-40. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Rowlands, M. (1993) 'The role of memory in the transmission of culture', *World Archaeology* 25(2), 141-151.
- (1999) 'Remembering to forget: sublimation as sacrifice in war memorials', In Forty, A. and Kuchler, S. (Eds.), *The Art of Forgetting*. pp. 129-145. Oxford, New York: Berg.
- (2002) 'Heritage and cultural property', In Buchli, V. (Ed.), *The Material Culture Reader*. pp. 105-114. Oxford, New York: Berg.
- (2003) 'Patrimoine et Modernité à Djenné: identités nationale et locale', In Bedaux, R., Diaby, B., and Maas, P. (Eds.), *L'architecture de Djenné, Mali: La Pérennité d'un Patrimoine Mondial*. Leiden: Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde.
- (2005) 'Value and the cultural transmission of things ', In Van Binsbergen, W. and Geschiere, P. (Eds.), *Commodification: Things, Agency and Identities (The Social Life of Things revisited)* pp. 267-281. New Brunswick & London: Transaction Publishers.
- Rowlands, M. and Bedaux, R. (2001) 'The future of Mali's past', *Antiquity* 75, 872-876.
- Rowlands, M. and Butler, B. (2007) 'Conflict and heritage care: guest editorial',

Anthropology Today 23(1), 1-2.

- Rowlands, M. and Tilley, C. (2006) 'Monuments and memorials', In Tilley, C., Keane, W., Küchler, S., Rowlands, M., and Spyer, P. (Eds.), *Handbook of Material Culture*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage.
- Ruskin, J. (1849) 'The Seven Lamps of Architecture', reprinted in Stanley Price, N., Talley, M.K., and Melucco Vaccaro, A. (Eds.), *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage* (1996). pp. 42-43. Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute.
- Samuel, R. (1994) *Theatres of Memory*, London: Verso.
- Saouma-Forero, G. (2006) 'Africa 2009: a story of African empowerment', *Museum International* 58(1-2), 83-94.
- Schijns, W. (1994) 'L'avenir de l'architecture de terre de Djenné', In Bedaux, R.M.A. and van der Waals, J.D. (Eds.), *Djenné, Une Ville Millénaire au Mali*. pp. 169-175. Leiden: Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde.
- Schmidt, P.R. and McIntosh, R.J. (1996) *Plundering Africa's Past*, London: James Currey.
- Schultz, D. (2007a) 'From glorious past to the land of origins: media consumption and changing narratives of cultural belonging in Mali', In Rowlands, M. and De Jong, F. (Eds.), *Reclaiming Heritage: Alternative Imaginaries of Memory in West Africa*. pp. 185-214. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Schultz, D. (2007b) 'Competing sartorial assertions of femininity and Muslim identity in Mali', *Fashion Theory* 11(2/3), 253-280.
- Selwyn, T. (1996) 'Introduction', In Selwyn, T. (Ed.), *The Tourist Image: Myths and Myth Making in Tourism*. pp. 1-33. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.
- Sidibé, S. (1995) 'The pillage of archaeological sites in Mali', *African Arts* 28(4), 52-55.
- Singh, K. (1998) 'UNESCO and cultural rights', In Niec, H. (Ed.), *Cultural Rights and Wrongs*. pp. 146-160. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Smith, L. (2006) *Uses of heritage*, London: Routledge.
- Soares, B.F. (2005) 'Islam in Mali in the neoliberal era', *African Affairs* 105(418), 77-95.
- Stanley-Price, N., Talley, M.K. and Melucco Vaccaro, A. eds. (1996) *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute.
- Tamari, T. (1991) 'The development of caste systems in West Africa', *Journal of African*

- History* 32(2), 221-250.
- Tilley, C. (1994) *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments*, Oxford: Berg.
- (1999) *Metaphor and Material Culture*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Tilley, C., Keane, W., Küchler, S., Rowlands, M. and Spyer, P., eds (2006) *Handbook of Material Culture*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Dehli: Sage.
- Titchen, S.M. (1996) 'On the construction of 'outstanding universal value': some comments on the implementation of the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention', *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 1(4), 235-242.
- Turtinen, J. (2000) *Globalising heritage – on UNESCO and the transnational construction of a world heritage*. Stockholm: Stockholm Center for Organizational Research.
- UNESCO (1999) *Decision Relating to the Implementation of the Yamoussoukro Declaration Concerning the Liberalisation of Access to Air Transport Markets in Africa*, ECA/RCID/CM.CIVAC/99/RPT: Economic Commission for Africa.
- Urry, J. (2002) *The Tourist Gaze*, London: Sage.
- Van Beek, W.E.A. (2003) 'African tourist encounters: effects of tourism on two West African societies', *Africa* 73(2), 251-289.
- Van der Aa, B.J.M., Groote, P.D. and Huigen, P.P.P. (2005) 'World heritage as NIMBY? The case of the Dutch part of the Wadden Sea', In Harrison, D. and Hitchcock, M. (Eds.), *The Politics of World Heritage: Negotiating Tourism and Conservation*. pp. 11-22. Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- Van Gijn, A. (1994) 'La maison: structure et organisation de l'espace', In Bedaux, R. and Van der Waals, J.D. (Eds.), *Djenné: Une Ville Millénaire au Mali*. pp. 95-101. Leiden: Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde.
- Wall, G. and Black, H. (2005) 'Global heritage and local problems', In Harrison, D. and Hitchcock, M. (Eds.), *The Politics of World Heritage: Negotiating Tourism and Conservation*. pp. 156-159. Channel View Publication.
- Warikoo, K., ed (2002) *Bamiyan: Challenge to World Heritage*, New Dehli: Bhavana Books & Prints.
- World Commission on Culture and Development. (1996) *Our Creative Diversity*, Paris: UNESCO.
- Wright, S. (1998) 'The Politicization of 'Culture'', *Anthropology Today* 14(1), 7-15.

References

Wright, W. (1995) 'Bring beauty back to Mali', *African Arts* 28(4), 84-89+112.

Yates, F.A. (1966) *Art of Memory*, London: Routledge and Keegan Paul.